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PERSONAL RELIGION AND THE LIFE OF FELLOWSHIP

BY

WILLIAM TEMPLE

BISHOP OF MANCHESTER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE BISHOP OF LONDON

FOURTH IMPRESSION

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INTRODUCTION

As might be expected from the author of *Christus Veritas*, this is a most powerful and convincing book. The reader will find himself in the grip of a clear and strong mind which has thought out some of the most perplexing problems in the world, and gives us in well-balanced language his solution of them so far as they are capable of being solved. The most typical story which illustrates the spirit against which this book is directed comes in the last chapter, when an excited officer at mess knocks over his glass as he exclaims : " What does this fellow Wilson want to butt in for with his beastly League of Nations ? " " Oh, damn ! Sorry, Padre. What I mean is, I *can't stick all this blather about human brotherhood*."

The Bishop's comment on this is as follows : " The chaplain, as representing officially the Church of God, was supposed to feel shocked at hearing the word ' Damn '—but it was not thought that he would expect an apology for blasphemy against the very heart of the Gospel which he was commissioned to preach."

And I am sure the Bishop would agree with me that probably the officer was the best-hearted fellow in the world who had just come in from risking his life for the thousandth time for his country, and would be the first to have helped along even a wounded German prisoner if he had come across him.

It is just because in tens of thousands we know this to be the attitude of " good-hearted fellows " that the Church has

got such a stupendous work before it and that conversion on a truly immense scale is still needed.

"All this blather about human brotherhood!" as the author of this book shows, touches the heart of the whole business. It is the neglect of this which has led to these constant wars and to the danger of another one in our own generation; it is exaggerated nationalism—so different from true patriotism—which is at this moment preventing all efforts to make peace in the world.

It is looking upon all talk about human brotherhood as so much "blather" which makes it so difficult to get peace in the industrial world at home. Even in the Church itself, as the Bishop shows so plainly, so long as we Church people look upon religion as "an affair between a man and his Maker," we are losing the whole idea of the Church as a great brotherhood, and especially the idea of the great central service of the Church, which we call Holy Communion, without realising that Communion means Fellowship.

However, I must not attempt in the Preface to re-write the book or restate the argument of it. All I will say is that in my opinion it is a greatly needed book, and that I am very grateful to the Bishop for having in the midst of his many engagements written it for us.

A. F. LONDON.

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RELIGION & FELLOWSHIP

CHAPTER I

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD

THERE is no sin which is in the Bible so frequently denounced as idolatry ; warnings against it pervade the Old Testament, and in what may be the last words of the New Testament, St John, after speaking of the revelation given in Jesus Christ, says : " This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols." For idolatry does not consist in bodily kneeling before a material image ; it consists in worshipping God under any other conception of Him than that which is set before us in the Gospels. Two commandments in the Decalogue condemn idolatry : the first condemns the erection of any other object of devotion by the side of God, to whom alone worship is due ; the second condemns the rendering of that worship to any unworthy representation of God. We shall be mainly concerned with the second, so we may as well deal at once briefly with the first.

To us the truth that God is One is so well established that we think it obvious. But of course it was not always obvious. As long as men thought of all the forces of nature as separate spirits, and attributed to every nation its presiding deity, it was impossible to reach faith in the One God. Such a stage is represented by Jephthah, who appears to assume that Chemosh is both as real in himself as Jehovah and is as truly the god of Moab as Jehovah is the God of Israel ;[1] and the first stage of development was to teach the Israelites that for them at any rate there was only one God

[1] Judges xi. 23, 24.

to be worshipped. Apparently it was Amos who first quite plainly grasped the truth—or rather was gripped by it—that the One God of Israel is the only God of Heaven and earth, who had indeed guided Israel's history, but had also guided the history of the hated Syrians and the despised Philistines, and cared for the black Ethiopians as truly as for Israel.[1]

This conviction was not reached by philosophic reasoning ; but there was a reason for it all the same. As soon as it is clearly understood that God is perfectly righteous—that the Majesty implied by the Name " God " only belongs to perfect righteousness,—it cannot be long before the Unity of God is also accepted and proclaimed. We do not say that there is only One God as meaning that there might in principle be several, but in fact there is only one ; we say that there is only One God because the very Name " God " has come to mean for us attributes that preclude plurality. There cannot be several, or even two, Beings to whom an absolute obedience is due.

We are not tempted to confess a belief in other gods under that name. But, of course, we find it most difficult to avoid this kind of idolatry in practice. We do in practice tend to put pleasure, or comfort, or wealth, or power, in a position which gives it sovereignty over some of our time and some of our energy. This is idolatry, as St Paul showed when he said that a covetous man is an idolater (Eph. v. 5 ; Col. iii. 5). But though we practise it, we know that it is wrong. We know that the first place belongs to God alone, and that He alone is rightful Sovereign over every moment of our time, every fraction of our energy. And if we have any kind of religious practice, we set apart definite times for concentrated attention and devotion to God. It is precisely this which makes uniquely important the conception of God which we hold.

If we believe in God at all, what we believe about Him matters more than anything else in our composition. To believe in God falsely conceived may easily be worse than to disbelieve in Him altogether. For we tend to become like

[1] Amos ix. 7.

that which we worship. The good influence of a true faith and the bad influence of a false faith pervade all life; in a thousand subconscious ways faith moulds or checks both thoughts and desires. But its influence alike for good and for evil is, of course, enormously increased if there is a regular and sincere practice of devotion. For then the whole heart is opened for the God to whom worship is addressed to enter in and take possession. If the idea of God with which you fill your mind is that of a proud Being, or capricious, or vindictive, your own character will be more marked by pride or caprice or vindictiveness in proportion as your worship is genuine and deep. The great perversions of conscience recorded in history are nearly all due to religion. The old summary of Lucretius is historically well founded:

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

To such a mass of evil could religion win assent.

Idolatry is indeed a deadly thing. False religion can be worse than atheism; scepticism is less dangerous than credulity. The atheist, who has no belief in God and no experience of religion, misses all that is best in life; but he is safe from all that is worst. Just because religion is the greatest power in the world, touching men's souls at a depth which nothing else can reach, it can, if it is perverted, do greater harm than anything else. And popular enthusiasm is no safeguard. When the official priest, Aaron, utilised the absence of the prophet, Moses, to purvey to the people the sort of religion they liked, he had their enthusiastic support. It was all very well for the Psalmist long afterwards to wax satirical about it as he described how "they turned their glory into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay"; but at the time it worked! *What* it would have worked if Moses had not returned was wholesale demoralisation, not because the devotion was insincere, but just because it was sincere. Men like Cicero could join in mumbo-jumbo rites before images of heathen deities without suffering much harm, because they did not believe in it. But

where there is faith there is peril in just the same degree in which there is hope. True religion is not easy; very often it will not be popular. Popular devotion is no evidence of the truth of the religion which arouses it. Kali, one of the cruellest of goddesses, evokes passionate devotion. Juggernaut has had the same fascination and power. Religious devotion, which can be itself the noblest thing in the world, can also be the most degrading. Its value depends upon the degree in which it is guided by Truth—or, in other words, upon the extent to which the worshippers keep themselves from idols.

We have said enough to show that the real evil of idolatry is quite independent of the use of images of wood or stone. The real evil is the unworthy conception of God. And until spiritual apprehension is rather far advanced, any material image is no doubt liable to suggest an unworthy conception. But we must remember that the idolatry to which the Jews were liable was not the use of exquisitely beautiful statues to embody a superhuman beauty and so suggest the loveliness of the divine; it was the worship of gods such as could be represented by the forms of brutes. And the character of these gods, as shown in the sort of worship which was supposed to please them, was brutal in either cruelty or lust. Moloch is a very different conception from Apollo; and the denunciations of Isaiah have no application to the masterpieces of Phidias or Praxiteles. The idolatry denounced by the Bible is not the effort to adorn worship with beauty so that it may be richer and deeper; it is the presentation of God to the soul in a form designed to correspond to our lusts, and not to raise us out of them.

The need for some means of presenting before the mind the God to whom our worship is offered is imperative. Even the prophets who denounced images proceeded to speak of God in vivid terms as stretching out His hand and uttering His voice; and these, though not material images, are images none the less; they are mental images. Some portrayal of God we must have; and it is of supreme importance that the portrayal be right.

To satisfy this need Christ came. He is the Word of God —the means by which God expresses and makes known His thought, His character, Himself. What Philip expressed is the deepest longing of every soul, though not every soul has discovered what it needs: "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." The answer was, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." So St Paul speaks of Christ as the "image of the invisible God"; and the writer to the Hebrews says that He is "the express image of His person." Here then is the true image—the fulfilment of the hope which had led to the making of idols. Here we see God.

But we must not forget that when Jesus Christ gave the final disclosure of the nature of God, He did not give it to people who as yet meant nothing at all by the name of God. The Jews among whom He lived had been trained through centuries to the degree of spiritual understanding which made it possible for them to apprehend the meaning of this final disclosure, at least enough to preserve and pass on the facts in which it was given. The Old Testament had equipped them with a conception of God in which the following are perhaps the main elements:—

1. God is the world's Creator; He is not just the soul of the universe, so that it is as necessary to Him as He is to it. He exists, so to speak, by His own right; the universe only exists because He chooses. "Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are, and were created." Now this is a very definite and distinctive philosophical doctrine. I believe that it affords a general view of things which is, even philosophically, better than any other. But there is no doubt at all that it is the view of the Bible in Old and New Testament alike. And this carries with it an infinite exaltation of God in Majesty and Power. "When I consider Thy heavens, even the works of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained—what is Man that Thou art mindful of him?"

2. Consonantly with this goes the conviction that God is a Living God, or, as in our colder language we are more apt

to say, is Personal. (Christianity has never dared to say, and has indeed elaborately avoided saying, that God is a Person. That might seem to limit Him within the outlines of personality as we know it in ourselves; moreover, we know certain things to be true of God which could not all be true of one person such as we are. Christianity, in fact, has always said that the One God is Three Persons. But it has no doubt at all that He is Personal.) And this means that the unity and constancy of His Will may reveal itself in the variety of actions by which He meets the variety of circumstances. He is not a mechanical force reacting with rigid uniformity to the pressure of other forces; He is personal, adjusting His action from time to time to the requirements of His one purpose in changing conditions. Hence the possibility of what we call miracle; it is grounded, not in any divine caprice, but in the divine constancy of personal action.

3. Consonantly, again, with both of these two convictions Christianity holds that God works in human History, and that History is a part of the arena in which His purpose is to be fulfilled. The Bible shows no doubt at all about this. Most of it is a History book. But it is different from nearly all other History books. It sometimes tells us very little, or even nothing, about what would usually be considered the causes of the events which it describes. This is because it is not concerned with the same question as most historians. They are concerned to answer the question, What here was the thought, or the intention, of men that they acted thus? The Bible is always concerned with the question, What here do we find of the Purpose or the Judgment of God? And of course the use of this for us is that we may learn to read our own History in the light of God's Purpose and Judgment. It is impossible to exaggerate this feature of the Old Testament. There is one book in it in which the Name of God is never mentioned—the Book of Esther. But most evidently God is Himself the hero of that book; it is a story of the working of Divine Providence. We shall be turning our backs on the Bible altogether if we do not expect to find in History the

working of God or fail to play our part in History as agents of His Purpose.

4. This Living God, who is the Creator of the world and the Ruler of History, not only commands and judges, but yearns over His people with a father's love. This thought has not in the Old Testament the same unique prominence as in the New, but its presence is unmistakable. Consider, for example, the prophecy of Hosea or Psalm ciii. There are other, and even alien, elements in the Old Testament conception of God from which this profound truth needed to be disentangled; but it was there.

The thought of God possessed by the Jews to whom Christ came already contained those four elements. What then did He add? And how far did this addition modify what was already there before He came?

No doubt the supreme thing that He added was Himself; and by the gift of Himself He has so incalculably increased the power of God over our hearts that this power, so exercised, was felt to be a new thing altogether and was called the Holy Spirit—who did not come, and perhaps could not come, until He had given and completed the revelation of God in His own Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension.[1] But we are concerned just now, not with the power that God gives us to obey His own commands, but with the conception of God which Our Lord impresses upon us.

Here, as so often, He did not so much teach what was utterly new as transform the old teaching by laying an exclusive emphasis on what was already there. The most famous illustration of this is His extrication of the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," from the chapter in Leviticus,[2] where it appears incidentally with no semblance of the dignity belonging to the ultimate principle of ethics. So it was in His teaching about God. The thought of God's Fatherhood was present in the Old Testament, but it was not supreme. The thought of Him as Father stood alongside the thought of Him as King, and as Lawgiver, and as Judge. On

[1] See St John vii. 39; xvi. 7; Acts i. 1–5. [2] Lev. xix. 18.

the whole it was for the Old Testament, speaking broadly, subordinate to these. Jesus Christ made the Fatherhood—the loving Fatherhood—of God supreme in the whole conception of God. Here, too, God is King and Lawgiver and Judge ; but these are aspects of His Fatherhood.

Into that thought of God's Fatherhood He threw such a depth and wealth of feeling that the Aramaic word in which He expressed it stuck in the memory and imagination, and even St Paul, who presumably never heard Him utter it, must insert it in the middle of his Greek letters when he is speaking of the difference that Christ has made. We do not only address God as " Father," we address Him as " Abba, Father "—that is, as Father, with all the depth and wealth of feeling which that word had for Jesus Christ.

Accordingly, we find one really staggering assertion in Christ's teaching about God—that He is as good to the wicked as to the righteous, because His love for all is absolute and unquenchable. We are to bless them who curse us and to love our enemies ; because in this way we shall be true children of our Father, who acts by that principle ; and our perfection is to be modelled on His.[1] And in His life the Lord acts by the same principle. His enemies may work their will. " When he was reviled, He reviled not again ; when He suffered, He threatened not." For those who crucified Him, He prayed that they might be forgiven, making excuses for them. And He is God made manifest.

This is truly startling. Is it not the very function of God to vindicate the moral law ? Yes ; but He does vindicate it. For though the law preserves its majesty when it punishes those who disobey it, it does not thereby achieve its purpose. For its purpose is not to punish crime, but to prevent the occurrence of crime ; it only punishes incidentally, so to speak, with the other object as its real purpose. And God did more to stop wrong-doing when He displayed the agony which it causes Him than ever He could have done by signal instances of punishment.

[1] St Matt. v. 44–48.

If ever you feel indignant or fretful at the thought that God loves the wicked as dearly as the righteous, and yearns with the same intense longing for their answering love, look quickly to see if you are not tacitly classing yourself among the righteous, and feeling hurt that His love should go out equally to others. And is not that Pharisaism? If anyone ever expressed this complaint in my hearing, I should wish to say: "Just leave those other people to God's love and mercy; or to his justice, if you will! The only way to estimate the value of a religious doctrine is to consider its influence upon yourself. And can you find anything more likely to purge you of self-contentment, or of envy, or of contempt, than to reflect that God loves those whom you condemn or envy or despise as truly as He loves you, and that Christ died for them as truly as He died for you?"

We are always misunderstanding because we try to apprehend Christian doctrine from a sub-Christian point of view. We stick to the notion of God as Judge, and picture ourselves standing one by one in the dock before Him; and we ask, What will He do to me? But He is our Father, and we are His children. And I can only claim Him as my Father if I recognise that other child of His, whom I find so disagreeable, as my brother. We are His children, not His slaves. The slave receives his orders; he is rewarded if he obeys, he is punished if he disobeys; but that is all; he is not welcomed into any intimacy. But we are free in our Father's House, and know (in some degree, at least) His mind and purpose. "You received not the spirit of slavery that you should relapse into fear; but you received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."[1] Our Lord Himself, on similar grounds, says we are not slaves but friends, because, instead of merely giving us orders, He has opened His whole mind to us.[2]

But we must not yet go on to the thought of our fellow-membership in God's family with all His other children. It is the thought of God Himself, as Christ has revealed Him,

[1] Rom. viii. 15. [2] St John xv. 15.

with which we are now concerned. And we must pass from the all-embracing love of God to that Divine Humility which is part of it, and which most of us find so hard in practice to accept. Yet it is not God as Creator who has drawn men to Himself; it is God as Redeemer. If indeed we lose sight of the doctrine of creation, we are on the way to think of God as a mere tendency in the universe, and so to lose all grounds for worship, and all genuine religion. Provided, however, that belief in the Creator be not lost, it is faith in the Redeemer which lifts religion to the Christian level.

No one who has thought of God as Creator has conceived Him as putting forth effort to create. The Word is self-accomplishing. "Let there be Light; and there was Light." Myriads of worlds following their appointed course through the vastness of space exist because He would have it so. But that self-willed souls should be won to love Him and thus make love, not self, the centre of their being—that costs what is represented by Gethsemane and the Cross. The world as a "vale of soul-making" is full of darkness and tragedy, into which God Himself must enter.

There can be no stronger assertion than this of the superiority of spirit over matter. The physical universe is to the Almighty a "very little thing"; what else is meant by calling Him Almighty? But not every task is, even to Him, a very little thing. The fashioning of a child's soul is a task to call from Incarnate God the Bloody Sweat and the Cry of Desolation. So much greater and more precious is a moral being than all the majesty of the starry heavens. And when we remember who it is that was Incarnate, the mingled reverence and fear of our worship becomes a love-filled awe in presence of God, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven . . . and was made man."

The glory of God is declared by the heavens, and by the firmament which is His handiwork. But we, who know a glory higher still, might address to God words suggested by those of the Prophet to the Servant of the Lord: It is too light a thing that Thou shouldest call worlds into being out of

nothingness ; Thou shalt turn pride into humility and call out love from the selfish heart.

If we omit the Doctrine of Creation we may encourage an easy-going familiarity with the God of Love, which has in it little to brace and nothing to humble. But if we stop with it, and never let Creation in our thought find its own true completion in Redemption, we may easily think of God as merely powerful in the way that our unconverted souls desire to be powerful.[1] Then we may humble ourselves before *Him* ; but before others we shall seek to exalt ourselves as He is thought to exalt Himself above us. For what a man thinks his God to be, that he will himself become. That, as we saw, is why idolatry, the worship of false images, whether those images be material or mental, is the deadliest of sins. And human pride, knowing its danger, has set up for itself a proud God, in hope that at cost of humiliation before Him it may maintain itself before all others. But it is not such a God that is revealed in Jesus Christ. He is the Maker of the worlds ; He has authority to destroy both body and soul in hell ; if any has right to be proud it is He. Yet when Jesus was specially conscious of representing God, " knowing that He came forth from God and goeth unto God," He did not sit on a throne and demand the disciples' homage, but did the act of menial service, washing their feet and wiping them with the towel wherewith he was girded. When the climax is reached, and the inner secret of God's triumph over evil is revealed, it is in the cry of bitter agony, " My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? "

That was the climax of creation. God has made the world ; that was quite easy ; but now He must enter into the lowest depths of the experience which the created world made possible, in order that He might interpenetrate it all and fill it all with

[1] Readers of Mr Studdert Kennedy's volume for last year in this series—*The Word and the Work*—will remember how powerfully he emphasised this point in his concluding pages. I deliberately close my first chapter with paragraphs recalling his last chapter so as to effect a continuity of expression, as there is a close kinship of thought, between that volume and this.

Himself; that it might be truly His, which was the purpose of making it, He must utterly give Himself to it. This is the unique point in Christian theology. No teacher, untaught by Christ, has dared to say of the Supreme—whether Person or Principle—that supremacy consists in utmost service. For Plato, as for Mohammed, while all things else must serve the Supreme, the Supreme is no servant. But when God became incarnate He said, "I am among you as one that serveth."

And only this can destroy pride and selfishness. The God who is only Creator and Judge might make us just, honourable, conscientious, upright; in short, the pagan God can make us good Pagans. But these qualities will not save the world. To a great extent they have actually controlled the world; and they have brought us where we stand to-day. Justice, which both gives and claims what is due, is a futile virtue when the subject in dispute is precisely what is due. It is the virtue of the judge, who stands outside the quarrel and decides between the disputants; but it is almost a vice in the disputants themselves, for it makes them defend their self-interest with the passion of a moral crusade. No; pride and justice, as men usually understand justice, are very splendid when we look at them from the half-animal level of our workaday existence; but they are fatal none the less, because they are not the spirit of ultimate reality, so that those who live by them are building their houses on the sand.

For God, who is the Creator of the World, and therefore its ultimate ground, by conformity to which alone persistence in being is possible, is not one who stands above the conflict awarding to all their due. He is within it, receiving without recrimination that which is not His due. And when He comes to us to claim our faith and obedience His credentials are always the same: "He showed unto them His hands and His side."

When I think of this Crucified Creator, and then of the world or of my own soul, I am frightened. For it seems to me that He is compelling us to a decision. We must more definitely accept Him or more definitely reject Him before

the world is much older. We know what He has done in taming the brute in us. To an extent which only a study of history reveals, He has taken away the sins of the world. But just those countries which have nominally accepted Him are in our time conspicuously trembling in a balance. Are we to go forward to a point of reasonableness in our mutual dealings which will mean the laying aside of trust in force, of all prestige that rests on force, and of all pride that delights in the victory won by force? Or are we to persist in the way of pride to our own perdition? For unless we move forwards, not only with courage, but with that kind of self-sacrifice from which all the natural springs of courage would turn us aside, the civilisation of Christendom is doomed. Our pride is going to perish one way or the other, either through obstinacy by self-destruction, or through sacrifice by transformation. And unless we willingly choose the latter, we shall have unwillingly to accept the former.

This Christian Gospel is a fearful thing. To all in us that is self-forgetful and loving it speaks joy and hope and peace. But to all in us that is self-centred and self-seeking it speaks doom and destruction. If we are perfect in love, we are free from fear; perfect love does cast out fear. But nothing else can cast it out from those who understand. If you are not yet perfect in love and have never trembled before the Creating and Redeeming God, it can only be because you have not at all apprehended the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If Jesus is God, then the world can be no place of comfort for selfish men. While they persist in their selfishness, they will build one social fabric after another on the foundation of their self-will; and all will crash down in misery; until they seek, and try to build upon, the foundation of real fact—which is love triumphant through sacrifice.

The place of crisis is in our own hearts. Do you believe—vitally and emotionally believe—that the Creator is the Redeemer, that Jesus Christ reveals the ultimate reality? I don't. My mind believes; my conscience approves; my heart applauds; but my heart is also set on too much else to trust

effectively. And if it were not that the Creator-Redeemer both can and does offer Himself to dwell within us and make us like Himself, I should have neither faith in God nor hope for the world. In Him, and in Him alone, is salvation.

Though all our lower nature shrinks from the sacrifice which it must face, yet in our best moments we know that the one satisfaction of our souls is to be found in their surrender to Jesus Christ, that He may shape them into the likeness of His perfect love, and that the accomplishment of this for mankind is the one means of purging out of the world all that now spoils and embitters life. "This is the true God and eternal life"; whatever else you do or don't do, "keep yourselves from idols."

CHAPTER II

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF HISTORY [1]

THE Bible is very largely a History Book, or rather an historical library. Even the Gospels are first and foremost historical records ; they set out to tell us of deeds historically done and of words historically uttered. Moreover, the Gospels come as the climax of a long historic preparation ; and they lead up to an historical development of which the opening stages, but by manifest intention only the opening stages, are described in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. Further, this development is regarded as so truly the continuation of what was set forth in the Gospels that it could be spoken of as what " Jesus began to do and to teach," while the events of Church history which follow are what He went on to do and to teach : the acts of the Apostles are His acts through their agency. If all this is a true revelation of God at all, it must certainly be true that God is at work in History, and that History is the arena—or one arena among others—in which His purpose is to be fulfilled. To this Christianity is utterly committed.

This makes an important distinction at once between Christianity and many other religions. No doubt any sort of religion which claims to be co-extensive with life must have some philosophy of history. But there are some which supply this briefly by condemning all the world of space and time as illusion—a dream from which the soul wakes up as it attains to true spirituality. Variations of this are offered to us by many Oriental religions and by many types of mysticism. Such religions may have great dignity and an austere beauty ;

[1] This chapter was published separately as an article in *The Pilgrim* for October 1925.

they may call for firm self-discipline ; they may hold up an ideal of lofty purity and carry their devotees far towards its attainment. But to condemn the chief occupations of most men's lives as illusory, and to stigmatise the heroism of men and nations as futile, is so drastic a procedure that we ought not to resort to it till we are driven there. It is true that these religions represent heroism as having a significance for those who school themselves to endurance, for by this means they become free from the illusion. But the heroism and the emancipation, being historical, are both part of the illusion. Once the spiritual level is reached, the agonies by which it is reached are of no significance. For those who are still on earth, moral effort has meaning and value as being the way to Heaven, or Nirvana, or whatever the perfect state is called ; but from the point of view of Heaven, when once it is gained, the struggles of earth are meaningless—part of the illusion from which they enabled us to escape. It is hard even to state this without being involved in absurdity, for it appears, as Mr F. H. Bradley said in another connection, that " we who apprehend the illusion are ourselves the illusion that is apprehended by us." But altogether apart from its logical difficulties, conscience itself revolts from a doctrine which tells us that the real reward of the hero who dies for his country is to be emancipated from the illusion that there is any country for him to die for, or that when once we have been redeemed it makes no sort of difference what the cost of our redemption was.

Christianity is as far as possible from dismissing History as illusion. It brings God Himself into History ; and it brings History into the very being of God. For not only does it declare that God has guided the nations ; but it declares that at a particular time (the days of Herod the King) and at a particular place (Bethlehem) a Child was born who was perfect God and perfect Man ; and that at another particular time (under Pontius Pilate) and another particular place (Calvary) this Child, now grown to manhood, was crucified. And while it declares that in one sense these events only disclosed once and for all what God eternally is, it also declares

that they made a difference to God Himself. Their value is not only for those who are passing through the process of time ; they have value in the sight of the eternal Father.

Those religions which try to be indifferent to History and describe it as illusion are often praised as peculiarly spiritual ; and those of us who know ourselves to be too much immersed in this world—its necessities, its comforts, its ambitions, its prizes of wealth, power, and pleasure—are bound to admire men who can even sincerely profess to ignore it altogether. But if Christianity is true, the spiritual and the material are not in themselves naturally hostile, though they easily enough become so ; they are mutually supplementary. The spiritual is only active, perhaps only actual (if these are to be distinguished), so far as it possesses and expresses itself through the material ; the material only realises its own potentialities when the spiritual dwells in it and controls it. Christianity is far the most materialistic of the great religions ; its central affirmation is, " The Word was made flesh." It is materialistic, not because it is unspiritual, but because its spirit is so strong that it need not run away from matter—even from flesh,—but faces it and dominates it.

Now if History is subject to the Divine Will, and is the arena or part of the arena wherein the Divine Purpose is to be fulfilled, the self-revelation of God must give us some guidance with regard to the true goal of History. As we saw, it is the chief characteristic of the Old Testament that its books set out to narrate the story of a nation in the light of the knowledge of God. That is what makes it, in its historical parts, in so many ways different from other history books. It is comparatively very little concerned with the motives of men, which play so large a part in our ordinary histories. In the Old Testament these sink into the background, and attention is concentrated on the purpose of God. That purpose may show itself in guidance or in judgment. But the question which the Old Testament writers are chiefly concerned to answer is never " What here was the purpose of men ? " but always " What here was the purpose of God ? " Their knowledge of God

was much less complete than ours. To them God spoke "by divers portions and in divers manners." But they steadily read their nation's history in the light of the best knowledge of God that they had. We have received a fuller revelation. We know, or can know, God more truly than Isaiah or the compiler of the Books of the Kings. We have to learn the secret of the Old Testament and practise it in the light of our fuller knowledge. Our question will always be: "What here, or what there, was the Mind and Purpose of Christ?" It is of comparatively little use to learn from the Old Testament how God guided the history of Israel, unless we apply the lesson by going on to inquire what is His purpose for modern nations and what is His method of dealing with them. One would like to think that all the visitors to Wembley have asked themselves, in their prayers when they got home, what Christ thinks of, and wants of, the British Empire.

One of our chief responsibilities as Christian citizens is to see that we are proud of the Empire for the right reasons. There is a great deal about it which is genuinely good, and nearer to the principles of the Kingdom of God than any previous great political construction; there is also a great deal which belongs to the level of pagan politics—pride of power, exploitation, self-aggrandisement; there is a certain amount about it which is bad by any standard, pagan or Christian. No one is proud of these last features, and truly they are few. But many value the Empire for the kind of pre-eminence for which Pericles might have valued it; and these tend to develop and strengthen that group of qualities in it. One of our chief Christian duties is to see that we value it above all for those qualities in it which really belong to God's Kingdom, so that we help to strengthen and develop these. Such, to take only one illustration, is the effort to maintain real justice between men of different races, and even between the British Government and native chiefs. We do not always live up to this ideal, but we have deliberately set it up as the ideal to be aimed at. A paragraph from Mr J. H. Oldham's great book, *Christianity and the Race Problem*, will bring this home:

> " A few years ago a White Cap Chief of Lagos brought a suit against the Government of Southern Nigeria and was successful. I remember well the impression made by this fact on one of my African friends, and his pride in the system under which, at the behest of justice, the august majesty of the British Crown had to acknowledge the claim of a petty chieftain in one of its dependencies. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council sits in London as an imperial Court of Appeal, administering not one uniform law but many—French law in Quebec, Roman-Dutch law in South Africa, Mohammedan, Buddhist, and Hindu law, and Native law and customs from Africa—and access to it is open without distinction of race, caste, rank, or wealth: Indian Maharajah and Indian ryot may alike appeal to it for the redress of wrong. Every week brings to its offices from India a sheaf of letters, revealing the confidence reposed in it by the people of India. When the applicant is too poor to engage a lawyer and the c se appears to justify it, one of the solicitors who regularly practise before the Court may be asked to look into it, gratuitously, for the applicant. A case is recorded of a West African native who, desiring to appeal to the Privy Council against a decision of the local Court, arrived one day in London with all his papers carried in a pile on his head. A solicitor who was approached by the Privy Council Office consented to take up the case, and in the result the appeal was allowed and the applicant returned to West Africa a happy man." [1]

But if we are to read, and so far as our influence extends to make, History in the light of the Divine Purpose, we need to know in general outline what that Purpose is. Can we say that there is a Christian doctrine concerning the goal of human history, towards the attainment of which our efforts ought to be consciously directed? At least in name there is such a goal set before us in the New Testament; it is called the Kingdom of Heaven, or of God, for the coming of which we are taught to pray. Elsewhere it is called the Holy City, which comes down out of Heaven from God. But the fullest

[1] *Christianity and the Race Problem*, by J. H. Oldham, pp. 89, 90.

account of it is given by St Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians. He begins with the thought of a Divine Purpose, which was framed " before the foundation of the world," as agents of which the members of the Church were chosen from the beginning ; the hinge or pivot of this Purpose is Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Love of God ; and its ultimate issue is " to sum up all things in Christ," who, meanwhile, is given to the Church, that is to the fellowship of Christians who are the agents of this purpose, as its Head, for the period in which the Church serves as the organ of His will in that accomplishment throughout the world of the Divine Purpose, which is the coming of Christ Himself to His completeness.[1] That, no doubt, is rather complicated. But if any grammatical construction is to provide a summary of the Divine Purpose, which governs all the vagaries of human history, it is bound to be a little involved. St Paul is often difficult. Sometimes he is difficult because he is wrestling with a great spiritual experience for which he has as yet found no adequate expression. It is not so here ; here he is difficult because he has won his way to such a fullness and freedom of Christian apprehension that he passes easily from any one point in the whole scheme of things to any other, in his effort to state the unity of all things which he has found in the Divine Will as revealed in Christ. In twenty verses he has only one full stop ; and the grammatical involution truly expresses the comprehensive range of his thought. Let us no longer try to express it as one thought, but break it up into its component elements ; and here, as always in the account of any purpose, we must begin with the end.

(*a*) The end, then, is a society of free spirits, actuated by a love of God which answers His love for them revealed in Christ, and in that love for the one Father of all united in love to all others to whom equally His love goes forth.

(*b*) The instrument for accomplishing this end is the Church, which is, ideally, the society of those who have already received the revelation of the love of God, whose

[1] Eph. i. 1–23, specially 4, 9, 10, 22, 23.

hearts are open to it, and whose lives are governed by the Holy Spirit—that is, by the Spirit of that love.

(*c*) The foundation of the Church and the impetus of all its activity is the revelation of the love of God in Jesus Christ.

(*d*) In the background, determining the conditions under which the love of God was revealed and its Purpose has still to be accomplished, is that fact which in theology is spoken of as the Fall of Man.

We have put these points in their logical order, but for purposes of comment it will be convenient to adopt the order (*a*), (*c*), (*b*), (*d*).

(*a*) About the goal there is no need to say very much at this point, except to emphasise the fact that Christianity neither expects nor desires a realisation of the Brotherhood of Man otherwise than as a corollary of the Universal Fatherhood of God. The reason why it does not expect it is supplied by its conviction about the Fall of Man. But even if it were possible, Christianity would be only half-interested in it. For it believes that the only true ground of man's well-being is in his fellowship with God, and while a society of mutual love among men, with no faith in God at its root, if such a thing were possible, would no doubt be desirable as far as it went, it would not be the true goal of all human endeavour, because every man's relationship to God is more important than his relations with his fellow-men, so far as these are to be distinguished from one another. Of course a society of mutual love would be a Kingdom of God in fact, because the love wherewith man loves his brother is the Holy Ghost at work in his heart. But it is an incomplete kingdom if the King is not acknowledged by His subjects. To put it in another way—our well-being depends on our being in the right relation to our whole environment, that is to nature, to society, and to God. But of these God is the chief and all-deciding factor. If we could be in the right relation to nature and to society while we were still in the wrong relation to God Himself, though it would be plainly good as far as it went, it would not be the true goal of human endeavour.

On the other hand, Christianity is quite equally emphatic that if we are in the right relation to God, that of itself will put us in the right relation to all else—to nature, to society, to one another. St John sums up this aspect of the matter truly when he writes : " If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar " : so love of God is the root ; but love of man is the fruit. If the first is there, the second will follow ; if the second is not there, the first, too, either is not there, or else is in a sickly condition. Let us test our own religious devotion by that touchstone.

(*c*) As about the end or goal, so about the initial impetus not very much need be said. If the goal of human history is to fashion a society rooted in the love of God, then plainly everything hinges upon the revelation of that love given in terms of human life, so that men may not only believe but sympathise. This is so familiar and so evident that there is no need to say more, except to insist that without this unveiling of the divine love and the consequent response in human hearts neither would the goal be conceivable as a valid ideal for men, nor would the method of approach to it be feasible.

(*b*) For though our starting-point in Christ and our goal in the City or Kingdom of God are generally accepted by Christians, it must be confessed with sorrow that we have not as a rule accepted St Paul's view of the method to be followed. We have emphasised certain functions of the Church almost to the exclusion of its function as the Body of Christ, the organ of His Will for the accomplishment of His Purpose in the world. So we think of it as charged to maintain and hand on in its fullness the Gospel of the Love of God in Christ ; to administer the Sacraments ordained by Christ ; to train character in individuals ; to comfort the sick and sorrowful ; to fortify the dying. All this is certainly quite indispensable. But the emphasis has all been laid on the guiding of individuals, one by one, through this perilous world, and the bringing of individuals, one by one, safely to " heaven "—whatever that may be : for a state of bliss which people can enjoy one by one is not the Christian " Heaven " ; that is the fellowship

of the divine love. Now, in laying stress exclusively on these things, we have been letting our thought run on a sub-Christian level. Some scholars have lately made much of the supposed influence of the ancient Mystery Religions on St Paul's doctrine of Christ and of the Holy Communion; but at the point with which we are concerned there is a fundamental difference, whether or not there are similarities elsewhere. The Mystery Religions, like all heathen religions, were concerned about the salvation of individuals one by one. Christianity is the religion of the redemption of the world, and profession of it involves membership of a society which is to show in itself the fruits of that redemption.

We need to stress this point because it is so often overlooked. Christianity is not simply one of the religions of individual salvation, differing from the rest only in having a different scheme of salvation. To treat it so is to make too little of its originality. Its profoundly unique doctrine of God involves a correspondingly unique thought about the religious experience which it seeks to bring about. The pagan mystic aims at and achieves a communion with God in august isolation. For him the highest religious experience is a "flight of the alone to the Alone." But for the Christian this is different. For him, union with God is union with perfect Love, with Love which embraces all other living things; so that, even if on the way he finds himself alone, in attainment he is not alone, but as he lifts up his heart to the Lord he finds that it is with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of Heaven that he lauds and magnifies the glorious Name. Christianity is as exacting as any religion, and more so, as regards individual responsibility and the need for individual conversion. But its conception of the soul's destiny is not its salvation by itself; it is its full entry into the fellowship of the redeemed.

That fellowship is the Church. At present it is only half-finished, in two senses. In the first place, it has not got its full complement of members or limbs, because there are so many individuals, nations, and even races, in which there is

as yet no response to the love of God. For this reason the missionary activity of the Church is necessary if only so as to enable the Church to be fully and completely itself. But, in the second place, the Church is only a half-finished thing because its members are only half-surrendered to the Spirit of Christ. Most of us Church people are also people of the world. We have not so far put ourselves into the hands of our Lord that no influence alien from His Spirit has power over us. So through the defectiveness of its membership both in quantity and in quality the Church is hampered in doing its work of drawing men into the fellowship of the divine love by giving in its own life and activity an ocular demonstration alike of the possibility and of the blessedness of that fellowship. But that none the less is part of the Church's task. Some of its implications will concern us later; here we are mainly concerned to emphasise the fact that in the Christian conception of History the Church holds a central place, because it is the chief instrument for causing the kingdoms of this world to become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

Of course this does not mean that this central position belongs exclusively to what the Church does through its own organisation and under its own name. Most of its work is done by individuals and groups acting on their own responsibility, but in the inspiration which has come to them through the Church; and we ought to extend our conception of Church-work to include all these activities. Sometimes people complain that the Church will give them nothing to do in the way of Church-work; but this is only because their conception of Church-work is so narrow. Canon Peter Green tells the story of a young man who on returning from the war asked for some Church-work to do; Canon Green inquired what his job was, and finding that he worked in a mill where gambling was a craze and was doing fearful damage he said, "Well, get some other fellows with you and try to stop the gambling in that mill." But this was not at all what the young man wanted! Similarly Fr. David Jenks has pointed out that if a

woman remains unmarried, is appointed matron of an orphanage, and brings up other people's children to be good Christians, she is called a Church-worker ; but if she marries, and becomes the mother of a family, and brings up her own children to be good Christians, no one calls her a Church-worker. Yet the good mother is a Church-worker ; and so is the Christian merchant, the Christian employer, the Christian artisan, the Christian journalist, the Christian author, the Christian statesman—if he conducts his occupation in the light of his Christian principles.

(*d*) But all this task of the Church, which is the inner meaning of all History, has to be performed in a " fallen world." This is not the place to discuss the Problem of Evil in general or of human sin in particular. But it is plain that human life is largely governed by selfishness in its various forms, and it is a supposed inevitable permanency of this state of things which men often express in the words, " You cannot alter human nature." To this the Christian replies : " No ; I can't ; but God can ; and to do this He was incarnate ; to do this He died on the Cross ; to do this by the power of His Spirit is the task of the Church." But while some thus take the selfishness of men for granted as a thing no more alterable than gravitation, others, or even the same people at other times if they are only averagely muddle-headed, will tell us that men can quite well do what they ought without any introduction of religion. If there is any reader of mine who is disposed to say that, I would reply : " It is very nice and humble of you to think everyone else so much better than you are. For I decline to think that you, who show your intelligence by reading what I write, are under the delusion that you, if left to yourself, can live as you ought. Just take the Sermon on the Mount and see if you can live like that. Can you really love your enemies ? Can you really care more about the Kingdom of God and His justice than about having enough to eat and drink, or clothes to put on your back ? And can you do these things, not now and then, at moments of sharp decision, when there is glory on one side and shame on the

other, but steadily, constantly, ordinarily in all the thousand-and-one choices of daily life? Of course not. The thing is impossible. It is not in human nature. But it is in divine nature, in which by virtue of Christ's Incarnation we are enabled to be partakers."

It is the selfishness and lovelessness of men that caused the revelation of God's Love to take the form of Crucifixion; it is this which commits the Church to the long, arduous, self-sacrificing course of patient effort in the attainment of the divine goal. But the conflict of God's love with man's selfishness is the real meaning of all History—its politics, its diplomacies, its wars, its intrigues, its aspirations. The Christian's one criterion of all events or proposals is the question: How does this affect the coming of that Brotherhood of Man which answers to the Fatherhood of God? Sometimes in answer to that question he will find himself compelled to join a political party; sometimes to offer himself as a soldier in a war; sometimes to refuse to fight even though his earthly country calls him to do so; sometimes to strike for the maintenance of law and order; sometimes to agitate for reform or to lead a revolution; but always to keep charity strong even towards his enemies and oppressors; always to seek mutual understanding rather than victory in debate; always to think first of fundamental human interests and only in the second place of "rights," whether of property or of status or of power.

Moral progress is the extension of the area in which we recognise obligation to others. It extends from the family to the clan, then to the tribe, then to the nation, at last to mankind. But Duty, for all its majesty, is not the highest motive of conduct; the highest is Love. And the Christian sees History as the sphere where Love is increasingly to predominate over selfishness and over the antagonisms to which selfishness gives birth. But his hope for progress is not in men's efforts, but in the opening of their hearts to God's love. "We love," if at all, only "because He first loved us."

CHAPTER III

THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH IN THE CREED

WHENEVER we say either the Apostles' or the Nicene Creed, we profess our belief in the Church — One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. The Church is then included among the fundamental articles of faith. No Christian doubts the Holy Spirit or the Forgiveness of Sins; but in the Apostles' Creed the Church and the Communion of Saints are mentioned between these two, as being certain and important in the same kind of way in which these two are certain and important. This is contrary to a great many modern tendencies in religion. In a great variety of ways we have made religion again into "a private affair between a man and his Maker." That is what the higher pagan religions are. But the Christianity of the New Testament is an intensely public thing. There are to be no secret adherents, such as Nicodemus was once disposed to be; he must come out into the open, receiving Baptism, and standing where the wind of the Spirit may catch him and carry him where it will. The first disciples, upon whom the Spirit fell at Pentecost, found themselves bound together in the fellowship of a singularly close-knit society. You find no unattached Christians in the Book of the Acts. To be a Christian, to have received the Spirit, to be a member of the Church are all inseparable at that stage; and so it might continue as long as the Church was unfashionable or was kept pure by persecution. Later, when it was both safe and fashionable to be a Christian, there were found those who were outwardly members of the Church, but had, apparently, hardly received the Spirit; and by consequence the institution of the Church came into

some discredit, and there were found some who had plainly in a real measure received the Spirit yet held aloof from the Church.

But the Creed is right. The Church is an integral part of Christianity. You cannot be a good Christian all by yourself. You need the support and inspiration of your fellow-Christians; and if you are a real Christian you will want to give them yours. But it is chiefly because of the function of the Church in relation to that divine purpose which is the inner meaning of human history that the Church is indispensable. We cannot by ourselves give to the world an illustration of the life of perfect fellowship that can and should result from our personal discipleship to Jesus Christ. No individual can do that; only a society can give an illustration of what human society ought to be; and it must be a society of Christian disciples; and that is the Church. It is quite true that the Church has often given a very feeble witness in this direction, sometimes scarcely any, never, at any rate since the earliest days, the full and convincing witness that the case requires. But the thing has got to be done, and only the Church itself—not individual Christians one by one—can do it.

All the so-called "Notes" of the Church, which appear in the Creeds, bear on its historic function of drawing all men into fellowship with one another in their common faith in God. Some people find these "Notes" rather tedious, but that, I think, is always because they think of them by themselves and not in relation to what the Church has to do. Of course, if it only exists to facilitate gatherings for worship, at which the various sorts of Christians may assemble after their kind, these Notes are very irrelevant. But this is a heathen notion of the Church; it puts it on a level with those mystery-sects which existed all over the Mediterranean world when the expansion of the Church began; and it bears no resemblance to the description of the Church given by St Paul. For him this all-embracing fellowship was the chief matter; so far as men had come in it was an accomplished fact (see Gal. iii. 28; Col. iii. 11); and, so far as they were being brought in, it was a fact in growth

towards its own completion (Eph. iv. 13). The task of the Church as set forth in the New Testament is to draw all men into fellowship with God, and in Him with one another. Now let us look at the Notes of the Church in the light of this task. These Notes are, that it is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

(*a*) *One.*—Plainly, if it is to be the instrument for uniting the world, it must be united in itself. Most lamentably and disastrously it has lost even its outward unity. This began when the Jews for the most part refused to accept the fulfilment of their own destiny. From that moment it became in one sense one-sided, through lack of the full strength of the contribution of the Jews. Then the split between East and West not only deprived the East of the stimulus that it would have found in intercourse with the West, but also deprived the West of those elements which would probably have saved it from that undue exaltation of its central Bishopric which makes so great difficulties for those who care about Re-union with Rome to-day. Again, at the Reformation two main strands or tendencies in Christianity—the individual and the corporate, the Evangelical and the Catholic—fell apart, and each has suffered grievously for lack of the other. In the "Evangelical" Churches the lack of corporate cohesion has led to perpetually fresh separations, while in the Roman Catholic Church the lack of stress on the freedom of spiritual life in every individual has led to a most excessive regimentation. The Church of England is peculiar in trying to hold these two together, and for this reason has a very special place in relation to the problem of re-union. In spite of the conspicuous antagonism of extremists, the chief mark of the last twenty years' history in the Church of England is the steady increase of fellowship between the Catholic and the Evangelical schools of thought; and it is significant that this synchronises with a remarkable development of intercourse with the churches of the East.

The evil of the disunion of Christendom is not merely or chiefly that the efficiency of the Church, or the weight of its

impact on the world, is diminished by its divisions, but that it is deprived of the opportunity of doing within itself for its own members what it ought to do. Its spiritual chemistry, so to speak, is upset. It is as though in one man's veins there were only red corpuscles, and in another only white. The total of both might be the right supply for both men, but health depends on their being mixed. Every part of the Church now suffers more or less from one-sided development; the true balance is found nowhere. In this sense there is not one Church, with several schisms variously related to it. That is from the nature of the case impossible, for as soon as any characteristic group breaks off, the parent Church is spiritually impoverished, and its claim to be the true Church is correspondingly impaired. Nor is this unjust, for it is usually quite as much the fault of the parent Church as of the separatists that the separation takes place. Rome is quite as truly responsible as Luther or Calvin for the breaches of the sixteenth century; the Church of England is quite as truly responsible as the Wesleyans for the failure of the latter to remain within the former.

On the whole the Church of England has most fully preserved the balance of Catholic and Evangelical in one body. But the Church of England has until lately been narrowly national. As it spreads over the world it begins to acquire an international character. It promotes one kind of fellowship within itself — the fellowship of Catholic and Evangelical. It is powerless to promote another now most necessary fellowship—the fellowship of French and German,—because neither are within it. In this respect it is far outdistanced by the Church of Rome, the most effectively international of all the schisms into which the One Church has been broken up; and that is the aspect of it which is to many of us most impressive. But if the Church is to be the source of that fellowship which bridges all divisions—Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian, bond and free, capital and labour, British and German, white and coloured,—it must be itself one, containing representatives of every one of these sections of mankind, so that in the

Church they may learn to value one another according to the value that all have in God's sight. A disunited Church cannot unite the world; but, worse than that, a disunited Church cannot be the thing which the Church exists to be—the living witness of the fellowship of all men with one another in the obedience and love of Christ.

(*b*) *Holy*.—The first Note of the Church concerns organisation and extent. The second concerns inner character and intensity. The Church which is to unite all men cannot be merely a society into which all can equally well come because there is nothing that anyone objects to. Unity cannot be effected in that way, for if all distinct character is obliterated, no one will even be interested in the colourless thing that is left. This is the fatal defect of all schemes for re-union by depreciation of differences. There are those who object to Christianity itself on the ground that it hinders religious union with Moslems and Buddhists. "Let us," they say, "have one religion in which all can join." But if it is one in which all can join, as they are now, and apart from any conversion, then no one in fact will join at all, because there will be about it nothing to attract a sparrow.

The Church that is to provide a home for all mankind, and help them to dwell together in unity, must be one which reflects the character of God Himself, and is in sober fact the organ of His Spirit. The Church is Holy in virtue of the presence of the Holy Spirit within it. By the incarnation, that is by showing His own nature in such a way as to call forth love and even sympathy from men, God established a new and greater power over the hearts of those who received that revelation; this is the peculiar power of the Holy Spirit, who is for this reason said to sanctify "all the elect people of God," or, in other words, those who are distinguished from the rest of mankind by the fact that they have received the Gospel. No doubt in practice we set up many barriers to the work and influence of the Holy Spirit, and as a consequence the Church as an organisation is less Holy than it ought to be. But that is a concealing of the real nature of

the Church. The Church itself *is* Holy; for it is the society of those who have received the Gospel, that is of those in whom the Holy Spirit is at work in His power. We may obscure its holiness by our infidelity, but in itself it *is* holy, with the holiness of God. And this is what makes it capable of meeting the spiritual needs of all men, and so binding them into fellowship.

(*c*) *Catholic*.—We need not say again that for the mere performance of the function for which it exists, the Church must be universal. And we have just seen that it must achieve this, not by making it easy for all to come in just as they are, but by becoming a channel of God the Holy Spirit, through which He may reach all men and raise them to fellowship with God, and, therein, with one another. But this will mean that it must uphold the whole of Christian truth, so that every man (or group or nation) may find in the Church just that which appeals directly to him. There is no individual, and no group of men, who have exhausted the unsearchable riches of Christ. Each of us lives by a fragment, even though we genuinely believe the rest. It is only part of the Creed that comes home to anyone of us with living force; and to each it may be a different part. To some the fact of the Incarnation, to some the redeeming Death of God Incarnate, to some the Church or the Communion of Saints, to some the Forgiveness of Sins, is the bit of the Creed that is alive with all the reality of a personal apprehension. There are comparatively few to whom all articles of the Creed are thus alive. But the truth contains and requires them all; and the Church must uphold them all. Moreover, each of us should wish for the fullest intercourse with those to whom other parts of the Creed are of most vital value; for so we shall both learn their truth and check any perversion of our minds through one-sided insistence on our own.

The Church, then, is Catholic not so much as actually embracing all men, but rather as qualified to draw each and all into fellowship with God, and therein with one another. For the realisation of this fellowship it is plain that there must be

some recognisable society with recognisable guarantees of its character. It is here that what has been called the " Lambeth Quadrilateral " comes in. The Bishops of the Church of England have laid it down that as the basis of the re-united Church there must be (*a*) the canonical Scriptures ; (*b*) the faith set forth in the historic Creeds ; (*c*) the two Sacraments ordained by Christ ; (*d*) a universally recognised Ministry. Some such requirements are indispensable to the Catholic Church if it is to fulfil its function, for in its desire to draw all men into itself it will lose its character and therewith all significance unless it maintains these constant reminders of its origin, nature, and purpose. Within the limits set by this " Quadrilateral " there may be very great varieties of opinion and ceremonial ; but the framework must be secure. Within the one Church so secured there may be any number of societies and orders, such as the Society of Jesus is in the Church of Rome, such as the Wesleyan Society was meant to be in the Church of England. But these varieties, which are essential to vigorous life, will break the unity, which is equally essential, if the marks of the order of the Church are obscure.

We are liable at this time to underestimate the importance of the outward guarantees of order. All the tendencies of our generation are towards unity. There is therefore a real risk of achieving unity on too easy terms ; and if that is done, the unity so established will break to pieces again when the swing of the pendulum comes, and the tendencies are again towards division. There are some periods when the Church might maintain its fellowship without any system of order at all ; there are others when the only hope of maintaining it is to stand fast by those elements of Church order which exist to express and safeguard its nature and purpose, and therefore the fellowship of all those who serve that purpose.

(*d*) *Apostolic.*—The fourth Note completes the series. If the Church is to overleap all gulfs and unite men across all divisions, it must be one with itself across the divisions of time ; it must be one with the Church of the Apostles. But

this Note means more than that ; it means that as the Church is one with the Church of the Apostles, so it enshrines the Apostolic principle. An Apostle is one " sent forth " with a commission ; and the Church is sent forth, in fulfilment of the Lord's words, " As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." The Church is not an association of people who joined together to promote certain theories or practices ; it is the historic and inevitable result of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and of the consequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is a divine creation, launched into the world by the impact of the Incarnation. It is Apostolic ; it is sent. And this is the foundation of all its hope. There is no hope that any human construction can achieve world-unity ; it would reflect the one-sidedness and the conflicts of its authors, or else if it succeeded in harmonising all for the moment, it would prove unequal to new problems and new demands which at the time of its erection were unpredictable. There is only one possible hope of world-unity ; it is in a Church launched into the world by God, the Father of all, and bearing within it His Spirit.

It is this Apostolic note that is specially represented by the commissioned Ministry. For of course we should never think of the Church and the Ministry in detachment from one another. People sometimes ask whether the Ministry is the essential element in the Church, to which the people join themselves, or whether the whole congregation is the Church, which develops the Ministry from within itself. Historically neither seems to be correct. What we find in the Book of the Acts is neither an Apostolate with a congregation attaching itself thereto, nor a congregation which either generated an Apostolate or conferred powers on one already there. What we find is a living body, with the Apostolate like a sort of backbone inside it. The Apostles have authority in the body in virtue of their special relation to Our Lord in the days of His flesh ; but they neither exist nor act without the Church. From the beginning it is an Apostolic Church, with the Apostolic principle—that is, the principle of a commission from

Christ to fulfil His will—enshrined in the Apostles and those whom they chose to bear their authority after them.

The most obvious need of the world to-day is some rallying point which may supply the nucleus of its unity by providing it with a universally valid standard of values. Our individual, international, and racial problems all cry out for this as the condition of their solution, as will become more apparent later on. This supreme need can be met, and apparently can only be met, by a Church truly Apostolic—that is, bearing the commission of God the Father of all ; truly Catholic—that is, maintaining the Faith which meets the needs of all men and the Order which holds them visibly together despite their differences of apprehension ; truly Holy—that is, actually living by the Holy Spirit, whose presence in the Church is what causes it to be the Church at all ; truly One—that is, finding in common dependence on that one Holy Spirit the fellowship which unites all men at the roots of their being.

In principle the Church is all this ; in power and actuality we prevent that principle from shining out to the world, because we have not yet let our personal religion lead us on to the life of fellowship. We have tried to win the blessings of the Christian revelation while remaining at the pagan level in the matter of obligation. It won't do. Personal discipleship to Christ involves membership in His Body, which means the doing of our own part, in the economy of the Body, in the fulfilment of the purpose for which the Body exists, which purpose is " to sum up all things in Christ." Our obligation as personal disciples is to do our part towards that great consummation.

CHAPTER IV

WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP

THE Christian life is a life of membership in a society. The true Christian inevitably finds himself linked up with his fellow-Christians in the common experience of joy in the knowledge of God's love and of service rendered in gratitude for that love. And yet we perpetually slip back into treating our religion as a purely personal affair. This is most noticeable at the Holy Communion, a service whose very name means Holy Fellowship, where many seem to feel that they may find a specially personal and individual form of devotion, and where the thought of all joining together in the common meal of the family of God has almost disappeared in many parishes.

Even when people realise the duty of joining with others in Church work or any kind of general service of the common good, they often cling to the notion that their devotional life at any rate is their very own. They will join with others in public worship in order to have the stimulus and inspiration of the general atmosphere of worship and in order to supply their own little contribution to it. Yet still they think—I imagine that we all tend to think—of public worship, not really as a common activity, but as a means whereby a number of individuals help one another in what still remains an individual affair for each. Certainly when I go to receive the Holy Communion at a quiet early morning service, it is only by a conscious and deliberate effort that I realise any genuine fellowship with the other members of that congregation. I may feel it with regard to my own absent friends, to those whom I love in the other world, to those whom I specially revere in the history of Church or world. That comes easier

than any sense of fellowship with others in the present congregation, for the simple reason that the one group consists of *my* special friends and *my* special heroes, while the other members of the congregation may not even be acquaintances. It is quite natural that it should be so ; but it is the work of grace to supplement, or, if need be, to correct, the tendency of nature. It is self-centredness that makes it easier to realise unity with our own absent friends than with others actually present with us in the Church.

In Our Lord's teaching our relationship to God is always set forth as a family relationship ; we are children before our Father. But often we tend to think only of the relation of child and father, while ignoring the relation of child and child in the one family ; we behave as if each one were an only child. This is a form of practical polytheism, for it really involves that each has his own God. In Christ's teaching we are fellow-members of God's family, and are to approach the Father as such. In some of the parables He makes it clear how everything goes wrong if we accept any other thought of God as ultimate. God is our Judge ; but if we think of Him as Judge in some way different from that in which every true father is a judge, we shall go wrong. The analogy of the Law Court, where an isolated prisoner confronts a judge with whom he has no personal relationship, is utterly out of place in connection with the relation of men to God. If He is to be compared to a Judge, in some respects it must be to an unjust Judge. The Judge has no right to grant a woman's request because of her importunity ; the request is either legitimate or not, and importunity has nothing to do with it. But a father may quite rightly defer the granting of a request till he has evidence of constancy of desire, or till he has by delay tempered liberality with a wise discipline. So, again, God appoints us our duty ; but if we think of Him as our employer we shall put everything wrong ; we may obtain the reward to which we are entitled, but shall feel ourselves unfairly treated when others, with less service to show, receive the same. And that will be because, having wrongly conceived our relation to God,

we involve ourselves in a wrong conception of our relation to our neighbour. As long as we stand on our rights, making claims and counterclaims, we have not risen to the Christian level. We are not hired labourers, picked up by an unknown employer to work for a wage ; we are children of one Father, members of one family. The labourer who has toiled all day in the vineyard may well complain if he receives no reward beyond that given to another man who has done one hour's work in the cool of the evening ; but the eldest son does not complain because his youngest brother, who has had less time in which to be dutiful, is as well loved as himself. And this is the true comparison. We are children, not hired servants ; we are brothers, not rivals ; our reward is love, not wages.

It is simply impossible to exaggerate the extent to which this thought of the family governs the whole Christian conception of the relation of men to God. And it is expressed in the opening words of the prayer that was given us as the pattern of all our praying. It is the prayer of the family, and of each individual in virtue of his place in the family. Of whom are we to think as " We " when we say " *Our* Father ; Give *us our* daily bread." Plainly of nothing less than all the children of God. Whatever right you may have to call God your Father belongs also to the unemployed at home, to the refugees from oppression in the near East, to the " untouchable " outcasts of India, to the Kaffirs of South Africa. If we are to say " Our Father " with full right, it must be in union with all these ; it must be for the satisfaction of their needs as truly as for our own that we pray, if we are really to pray after the manner of the Lord's Prayer.

It is a familiar thought that that prayer is utterly unselfish, and that it is centred upon God and not on ourselves. Our first desire is to be for the hallowing of His Name, in earth as in heaven ; our second, for the coming of His Kingdom, in earth as in heaven ; our third, for the doing of His Will, in earth as in heaven. And only then do we turn to any need of our own. All this is true, and most important. The prayer which Our Lord gave us as the model for all our praying

is just the prayer that we should of ourselves wish to offer if we did already love God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. It is the prayer of one whose soul is utterly dedicated in love to God. But that is not the aspect of it which concerns us specially just now. What we are now concerned with is the fact that, as we thus approach God with the prayer that would naturally arise out of love for Him, we also approach Him not as individuals but as members of His family. We come saying "*Our* Father." We ask for *our* daily bread. Just at the point where we might most easily limit our thoughts to our own needs—that is, as we ask for forgiveness—we are made to remind ourselves that only those who forgive have the right even to ask forgiveness for themselves.

Let us remind ourselves once again that this is not one prayer among others ; it is the pattern prayer ; and its nature is determined by the very Nature of God which Our Lord came to reveal, and by our relation to one another which is involved in the relation of each one of us to God. Christian prayer is all family prayer, where the family is all mankind.

We ought to plan our intercessions by the light of this principle. Of course, we shall pray specially, and most frequently, for those people or those causes with which we are specially connected. We can pray more intelligently for them than for others, and, as a rule, with fuller reality. But we must take care not to let our intercessions be limited by this. We must deliberately and carefully think out the needs of the world, and pray for those which are greatest in themselves, as well as for those with which we are personally concerned. Sometimes the greatest needs are such that few people are directly interested in them. But we are members of one family ; and it is the duty of all to see that none is neglected or given the cold shoulder.

It would be out of place to try here to give any outline of the reasons for praying, or of the kind of difference that we may rightly suppose our prayers to make. Only this shall be said : Prayer is an expression of love. Where there is no

love, there cannot be any prayer. Sometimes the love may be very feeble, and only just strong enough to give rise to a real prayer ; yet, if we make that prayer, it will strengthen the love it springs from, as any expression of an emotion tends to strengthen that emotion. And so a better prayer becomes possible. Prayer and love deepen each other. If we are Christians in any living sense, our love is sure to find expression in prayer, and so to become deeper. Prayer, therefore, and especially mutual intercession, is one great means of increasing the volume of love in the world.

This does not mean that the effect of prayer is only, or chiefly, to be found in the person that offers it. I have already said that I am not now dealing with the question, Why should we pray ? But for fear of misunderstanding, let me say that I firmly believe that there are activities of God which are released (so to speak) by prayer, and that He Himself takes action in answer to faithful prayer, not indeed always as the offerer of the prayer would in his ignorance have chosen ; but as He in His wisdom knows to be best, He fulfils the petitions of his servants " as may be most expedient for them." But the approach to the subject which I wish to commend just now is this : prayer, especially intercessory prayer, is an expression of love on the part of him who prays towards those for whom he prays ; for the Christian it is a natural and almost necessary expression of that love ; and by expressing love it increases it. But God is love ; and the love from which prayer springs is the Holy Ghost at work in our hearts. The Christian can never think of love as a mere sentiment or state of feeling it is a power ; it is the supreme power of the world. That it should be generally realised as this is the first condition of human welfare. And one way to this is prayer, which expresses and so increases the love that is to prevail over all other forces.

To put it quite shortly : we are God's children ; the welfare of ourselves and of all others depends on our recognition of this fact. That recognition must show itself in two directions —towards our Father, God, and towards our brother-men ; the natural way to express these two things at once is to pray

to God for them. So we both express and increasingly realise our fellow-membership in the family of God.

In that form of prayer, then, which is called Petition we do not come as isolated individuals each to his own God. We come as members of a family to the Father of the family ; we pray for them as for ourselves, and we ask from the Father of all nothing for ourselves which we do not also ask for the others. We can never rightly pray against others. In the war we could rightly pray for victory only so far as we sincerely believed that this was good for the Germans. At any time in those dreadful years an Englishman and a German could have knelt side by side saying the Lord's Prayer ; and they would have meant exactly the same thing. This is always true of Christian prayer.

The Sons of Zebedee came once to Our Lord with the petition which exactly expresses how we tend to pray, and which is exactly the opposite of how we ought to pray : " We will that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee." So we come to get what we want. " Will you do for me what I want ? "—that is the form of natural prayer. But the form of Christian prayer is : " Will You do with me, and with all men, what You want ? " Those two Apostles wanted for themselves something which, if granted to them, thereby became unattainable to others, for only two could sit next the King, one on His right hand, the other on His left. So the other ten were indignant, and thereby showed themselves to be as yet certainly almost, possibly quite, as far below the truly Christian level as the two Sons of Thunder were at that time. And the Lord's answer is : " Can you share My sacrifice ? In My Kingdom humility is the only greatness, service the only honour." It must be so if God is what Jesus Christ revealed Him to be. And nearness to the King is not, in fact, something which some may have at the expense of others ; it consists in the completeness of self-sacrifice with which our service is rendered ; it is not to sit beside Him ; it is to dwell in Him, and He in us ; and He is self-sacrificing, self-forgetting love.

At one point, however, many will feel that we are alone, each one, face to face with God. When we confess our sins, each is disclosing the guilt of his own heart. We may do this at the same time, in the same place, and by using the same words; yet for each it is a purely individual act. And, of course, this is in some real measure true. Each man does bear his own responsibility which no one can share with him. Only God can tell what moral strength each man was equipped with at the outset, what opportunities he has had, or what temptations have assailed him. None of his brethren ever knows just what his personal and individual responsibility is; he does not even know it himself. But they and he know that it is there, though they cannot determine its extent. There is an area of free choice where each of us determines his own conduct and thereby also his character; for we cannot choose to *be* something (as, for example, brave) and then act accordingly; we can only choose to *do* something (as, for example, to stand firm in danger), and so make for ourselves a character more akin to that action. All that men know is how, in fact, we behave; only God knows the secrets of the heart. There are men who have acted as cowards, who were spiritually braver than some others who never showed fear, because, though they yielded at last, they had put up a fight against temptations, perhaps nervous instability or terrors of imagination, of which the others would have proved incapable had it ever been asked of them. We must never suppose that we can pronounce a final moral judgment on others, or even on ourselves; but we know that there is such a judgment to be pronounced, and that each of us must face it alone.

But this most solemn truth must not blind us to the fact that the responsibility which each one of us carries is still the responsibility of a member of a family, not that of a solitary individual, and the principle of fellowship demands application in our penitence as much as in our petitions. Both confession and absolution are conditioned by it.

1. In the first place, most acts which are wrong are wrong because they destroy fellowship or injure our neighbours.

There are three ways in which an act can be wrong: (*a*) It may spring from a perversion of character. This is true of those wrong acts that we call bestial; also of acts of sheer cruelty. (*b*) It may be wrong because its actual effects are evil. This is true of indiscriminating "charity." The desire to help is good; but to give money is sometimes to injure, not to help, and then to give money is wrong even though the motive be good. (*c*) It may represent a principle injurious to, or destructive of, mutual trust and the welfare of society. This is illustrated by lying or gambling. The real reason why we should not tell lies is, as St Paul said, that we are "members one of another." The fundamental objection to gambling is that it is a distribution of wealth on the basis of chance, and that is socially unwholesome.

Of course, many sins fall under two or more of these three classes. Drinking to excess falls under both (*a*) and (*b*). Gambling, at a time like the present, when desperate harm is being done by indulgence in it, falls under both (*b*) and (*c*). But there remain the three general types of wrong act; and of these three, two have reference to society and its welfare. Plainly, then, the content of our confession ought to be settled for us very largely by our position as members of the community.

2. Further, we are responsible not only for our conduct but for our influence. There is no fact from which we shrink more anxiously than we do from this. We like to think it is enough if we keep our own lives straight; but quite plainly it is not. If we talk cynically, or in any way encourage a lowering of standards, even though we still control our own actions, we become responsible for the failure of those who, weakened by our conversation, fail to do so.

> He who saws through the trunk, though he leave the tree up in the forest,
> When the first wind casts it down, is his not the hand that smote it?

And the test is more searching even than this. We are not only responsible for the influence that we do exert, but also

for the influence that we might exert and do not. A bad custom or habit may begin to appear in our own social circle, or in the place where we work. Of course it is something that we should refuse to follow it. But it always may be that by some protest in the early stages we might rally others and prevent it from ever being established ; and if we do not utter that protest, we are involved in guilt for the establishment of that bad custom, even though we never adopt or follow it.

3. Once again, the fault that we have to confess to our Father is nine times out of ten an injury done to another of His children. It is not only that I am the kind of person to have done the thing for which I ask pardon. I have to remember that the Father whose pardon I seek loves that child of His whom I have injured just as He loves me. In my confession of sin I can never rightly forget that I am one of the family. It is my own confession for my own sin ; but it is the confession of one of the family for wrong done to the family.

4. Above all, there are the great evils for which we have no separate guilt, but certainly have our share in the common guilt. Some of these will occupy us more particularly in the next chapter. But if anyone feels that the language which the Church asks him to use is exaggerated—"We do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings ; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us ; the burden of them is intolerable "—then let him think of slums, and sweating, and prostitution, and war, and ask if the remembrance of these is not grievous, and if the burden of them ought not to be intolerable. Let him remember that these horrible things are there, not because some men are outrageously wicked, but because millions of men are as good as we are, and no better. The individual penitent cannot solve the housing problem. But if all Christians loved their neighbours as themselves—that is, if those of us who have nice homes felt the wretchedness of living in overcrowded tenements as acutely when it is others who live there, as we should if we had to live there ourselves—do you not think that more energy would be put into its solution ? You think you are free of all guilt for the existence of prostitu-

tion. Are you sure that you have done all you ever could, not only to control your own conduct and conversation, but to uphold a high standard of chastity, to refuse all countenance to the notion that conduct may be condoned in men which is censured in women, to show sympathy and friendship to women who have started on the downward path, so that they would know of your readiness to help them back? Of course we are all guilty of these things, some less than others, but all guilty, and we ought to find the burden of it intolerable.

And we shall very literally find the burden of the next war intolerable if we will not do our part to create that volume of love and mutual sympathy among the nations that will stave it off. Did you pray for the Germans between 1914 and 1918? That was the only explicit command of Our Lord with reference to those years. There were other duties, no doubt; many of them we knew already and did not need Incarnate God to teach us. But this we did not know; this He did command; and this we scarcely did. Are you praying now for the Germans? and for the French? and for the Chinese? Are you trying to understand and to sympathise? You probably are horrified at the Bolshevist *régime* in Russia: so am I; it has in many ways been dreadful. But have you tried to understand and to sympathise?—to see the good as well as the great mass of evil?— the true idealism as well as the crude use of brute force? We have not taken up the sense of moral responsibility which goes with that world-citizenship which science has forced upon us by bringing us into so close a contact with one another. But whether we feel it or not, it is there. We have to exercise our Christianity over a wider field than our forefathers, because our influence is active over a wider field. And the extension of the area of our responsibility is an extension of the occasions of our penitence. We need to find in a new degree a sense of individual responsibility for social guilt.

In a variety of ways, then, it is brought home to us that in our penitence we do not escape from our membership in the

family. The Bible gives, as the first question put by an uneasy conscience to quiet its own tumult, " Am I my brother's keeper ? " Most of our sins against God are sins against Him only because, first, they are sins against His other children.

If the sins that we ought to confess depend upon our relationship to other members of the one family of God, so does our forgiveness. There seems to me to be a very surprising feature in most of the books that I have read and the sermons that I have heard on this subject. Over and over again it is said that Our Lord promises forgiveness to those who repent ; there is often some discussion of the question how far His Death was a necessary condition of forgiveness on the side of God ; but there is almost complete agreement that the one condition required on our side is repentance. Of course there is in the Gospels an immense insistence on the need for repentance. Also there is the reference to repentance in Our Lord's teaching about our duty to forgive others. But when He is actually speaking about God's forgiveness of us it is not " repentance " that He mentions ; it is our own forgiveness of those who have injured us. Only one petition in the Lord's Prayer has any condition attached to it : it is the petition for forgiveness ; and the condition attached to it is this. No doubt if by repentance we mean all that the word means in the New Testament, it will include a forgiving spirit ; for to repent is to change one's outlook and to regard men and the world as God regards them. But everyone can feel that the emphasis would be quite different if the words were " Forgive us our trespasses, for we do truly repent of them." This would be like saying, " I am so sorry ; and I won't do it again ; do forgive me." In other words, the plea for forgiveness would rest on an apology and a promise made to God ; and that is not the basis on which Our Lord bids us rest our plea. It is to rest on our attitude, not towards God, but towards His other children. He is always ready and eager to forgive ; but how can He restore us to the freedom and intimacy of the family life if there are other members of the family towards whom we refuse to be friendly ?

The strongest expression of Our Lord's teaching on this subject is found in the parable of the unforgiving servant. We sometimes miss part of the meaning of that parable through our unfamiliarity with the money-terms in which the story is told. The debt owed by the first servant to the king was two and a half million pounds, so that when he said, "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all," he was promising what both he and the king knew that he could never perform. But the debt which the other servant owed to him was about £5, which easily might be repaid if time were allowed. So we come to God to ask forgiveness for offences for which reparation is impossible; we owe Him all our time and all our strength; even if we serve Him perfectly from now to the end of eternity, it is only our bounden duty; it makes no amends for the past. We cannot repay; yet we ask for forgiveness. And the one condition is, not that we should be full of remorse, but that we should be ready to forgive others the paltry injuries they do to us.

This is not at all difficult to understand if we keep the family relationship full in view as the true type of our relationship to God. But if we once let the analogy of the Law Courts possess our minds, all hope of a Christian notion of forgiveness is gone. That is exactly where so many theories of the Atonement have failed. They picture the sinner as prisoner in the dock, and God as the Judge on the bench. That puts the fundamental relationship utterly wrong, for the prisoner in the dock has not injured the judge, nor is he in any way concerned with the judge, except to know what the judge is going to do to him. His concern with the judge is self-centred; and our concern with God ought not to be self-centred. The judge has not been crucified to win his love; he is only an official discharging a public duty. God is our Father; He yearns over us with an unquenchable love; and when we turn to Him as penitents, it is not to ask for remission of penalty, it is to ask that we may be taken to His heart once more.

Besides this, the prisoner stands alone; his offence is the

breach of some law, and his punishment is to suffer in his own person for breaking that law. But we come before God as His children; and, as has already been said, He can only welcome us to the freedom and intimacy of His home if we will lay aside our grudges and resentment against others, who have just the same rights there as ourselves.

It appears then, that, as in petition, so in penitence, we are members of the family of God, and the principle of fellowship should govern both these forms of worship. We have followed the question in sufficient detail under these two heads to make it unnecessary to go closely into the same question in reference to adoration and communion. Adoration is the form of worship in which we come nearest to Heaven; and, as has been remarked, while Heaven has often been compared to the performance of music, it has always been to a chorus or an orchestra, never to a solo. Each must render his own part, no doubt, or the full harmony suffers; but his part is a poor thing by itself. It is only the Church, the fellowship of the redeemed, that can offer worthy praise; and this will only be all that it aspires to be when the Church embraces all men. My praise will not be what it aspires to be until it is offered in concert with that of Indians and Chinese, of negroes and of half-castes. All are wanted to make the harmony complete.

This aspect of Christian worship, like every other, finds its culmination in the Eucharist. There, above all, we are to find our unity with Christ, and with one another in Him. All the symbolism of the service insists on this. There we kneel side by side in virtue of our common discipleship. Differences of rank, wealth, learning, intelligence, nationality, race, all disappear; "we, being many, are one bread." We receive the food which has, by its consecration, become for us the Body of the Lord, that it may build us up into that Body, so that as different limbs, but one Body, we may be obedient to His will and carry out His purpose.

It is impossible to separate the individual and corporate aspects of the Holy Communion without irreparable damage to both. That such damage is common there is no doubt.

There are many extremely devout people who treat this service as in effect the most intimate of private devotions. That at once reduces it to the level of a Mystery Cult. It is the family meal, where the children gather round the table to receive what their Father gives them. And what He gives, through His incarnate Son, is His own nature ; in other words, it is love. But if we receive love, of course we become more loving ; we are more closely united with our brother-men ; for love is the capacity for, and joy in, the union of spirits. " If a man say that he love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." If a man say that he has received the Body and Blood of the Lord, and is void of love to other men, he is a liar. " God is Love " ; the Body and Blood of Christ are human nature perfected in love by uttermost sacrifice. If we are in fellowship with God we are by that very fact in fellowship with one another. If we are not in fellowship with one another, if we are envious or contemptuous, if we bear hatred or malice, if we are snobbish or exclusive, we are not in fellowship with God.

Fellowship, then, is at the heart of Christian worship. Each of us must lay bare his own heart before God ; each must offer his own prayer, which is love in utterance and desire ; each must sound his own note in the Church's harmony of praise ; each must come to receive into himself the gift of the divine life of love. But each must come as one member of the family of God, rejoicing in the presence of all His children before the one Father, " who made and loveth all."

CHAPTER V

DISCIPLESHIP AND POLITICS

So far we have been considering the principle of Fellowship as it appears in the inner life of religion ; but what has been said shows plainly that it is bound to claim application also in the field of practical life. We are always convicted of insincerity if we pray for any boon and do not take any step that is open to us to secure it. If we pray, " Give us this day our daily bread," and do nothing, even when we might, to end the need of the houseless and the unemployed, either our prayer is hollow or else we must be saying it with the meaning, " Give me this day my daily bread." We have seen that it is as a family that we are to make petitions, express penitence, seek forgiveness, utter praise, offer ourselves in union with Christ to be a living sacrifice. The last plainly implies action ; the others are a sham without it. And we have the explicit declaration of Our Lord that He will judge us according to our service to the hungry and thirsty, the stranger and the naked, the sick and the criminal.

Something we can do by personal effort ; but it comes to very little. It is hardly conceivable that our responsibility as Christian citizens is limited to so small a sphere. The way that we use our vote undoubtedly may affect in very vital ways the lives of our fellow-citizens, and of our fellow-members of God's family who are not of our own nation. How does our religion affect our civic and political action ?

Here, as usual, the first point at which our religion makes a difference is the standard of value or importance. It makes a great deal of difference whether or not we think of all citizens of an earthly State as also citizens of a heavenly State, members

of the family of God, destined for eternal life with Him. If all of this is left out of sight, it may seem legitimate and even right to tolerate arrangements which dwarf individual development, and use the citizens as merely instruments of the national policy; or again, if it be held that there is, none the less, an obligation on the part of the State towards them, this will tend to be interpreted as a concern for their temporal welfare only. We have a little, though not much, of the former theory; we have a great deal of the latter.

But if every individual is destined to be a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, his importance as compared with the State to which he belongs is enormously enhanced, and his eternal interest at once towers over his temporal interest. It may be right that his temporal interest should be sacrificed to the interest of the State; it may be right that he should be poor that the State may prosper, if his poverty ministers in any way to this; it may even be right that his body should die that the State may live. But it can never be right that his spiritual interest should be sacrificed to any conceivable interest of the State, for in his eternal destiny he is greater than any State can be.

To give anything resembling a full answer to the question how our religion should affect our civic and political action we must distinguish two kinds of political action—action affecting the constitution of the State or the institutions of Society, and action aiming at the establishment of particular goods or the remedy of particular evils. The second class does not present any very great difficulty; the guiding principle is clear, namely, that we must take a public-spirited and not a selfish view. A little while ago a large body of ratepayers in a London Borough, becoming aware of the bad housing conditions prevalent in some parts of the Borough, presented a petition to the Borough Council asking for an increase of rates in order that this evil might be remedied. That was a splendid example of Christianity in action. And it is certainly the duty of the Christian citizen to consider, at such times, for example, as General Elections, how the different policies proposed

affect the general welfare of all citizens, and indeed of all mankind, so far as that is involved or is calculable, and not only or chiefly to inquire how they affect himself or his family.

A difficulty, however, sometimes arises here concerning membership of a political party; and there are those who would urge Christians to keep aloof from party altogether, and try to be an independent body, judging every question on its merits. Now it is certainly of the utmost importance that the Church should remain independent of party, which historically it has often failed to do; for in England it has in the past been a fairly constant ally of the Cavalier, Tory, Conservative party. But it ought to be detached from party, for this reason: in forming a policy to deal with any question it is necessary to choose between a number of alternative methods, where the choice has to be made on grounds of expediency; and it cannot be said that one method is more akin than another to the Gospel; and the Church has no business to commit itself to anything whatever except the Gospel and whatever follows from it by real necessity.

But while the Church ought to be detached from party, it seems desirable that individual Christians should be associated with the party which on the whole they most approve. Of course they should retain full freedom of thought, of utterance, and of action. One reason why they should belong to the political parties is that they may effectively protest if their party has resort to unworthy methods. And on the whole the party system is sound. It is best that legislation should be carried by those who thoroughly believe in it; and it is best that those who do not should be in a position to criticise it as vigorously as possible. And the whole truth gets justice done to it by degrees through the alternation of Governments, each party carrying into effect as much of its programme as the criticism of its opponents will allow, which is probably all that can wholesomely be carried. If we look at the political history of England from 1832 to 1914, it follows a fairly direct line of development, not the jerky zigzag you would expect from the alternation in office of people who spent their time

largely in mutual abuse. Mr Gladstone made education compulsory ; Lord Salisbury made it free. Both those statesmen hated socialism, but both those measures were socialistic ; and the Conservative enacted the corollary of the Liberal's action. The party conflict is very superficial ; Mr Baldwin and Mr Macdonald have far more political ideas in common than either shares with the Duke of Wellington. The Mind of the Age really guides both parties ; but each party only possesses part of it. It is well that each should have its turn, and that all should do their best both to strengthen and to guide the party with which on the whole they sympathise.

But while they act with their party they should, of course, keep themselves free from the narrowness and bitterness of partisanship. They should act as a leaven in their party, keeping it true to its own best ideals for the sake of which they belong to it. And they should be specially careful to remember that no one person or group of like-minded persons sees a question from every angle or in the light of all relevant experience ; and they will be glad to know that there are others with an angle of vision different from their own who will supplement their defects. Thus they will keep alive in their party and in themselves the spirit of charity towards other parties, and will tend to check the bitterness which often prevails in political life, and which, when it prevails, disturbs the sense of proportion and perspective.

This department of the subject, as was said, presents no great difficulty. There is more difficulty when we consider what the attitude of Christians should be towards the constitution of the State or the institutions of Society, and towards movements which challenge these. Again, we must go back to the standard of value or importance. Why do these things matter ? The secularist may answer : Because a nation only prospers if it has a constitution that suits the temperament of its people ; and for this reason, a constitution that has grown with the nation's life is likely to be far better than any ready-made Utopian scheme spun by the brains of theorists. This is perfectly true, and nothing that is added should be regarded

as for a moment contradicting it. But if we are Christians we are bound to esteem the character of the citizens above the prosperity of the nation; and if it ever appears that these two conflict, the former must be preferred. For to the Christian nothing temporal is ultimate. His aim is not first to bring prosperity to the citizens of his country as they are to-day, but to help them forward in all those things that fit them for eternity.

Now the common view is that the Church is concerned with spiritual issues and eternal destiny, the State with temporal issues and economic prosperity. But you cannot cut the two apart in this way; for the two consist of the same people, and they cannot act on divergent principles without an inconsistency which amounts to hypocrisy. It is commonly thought that religion is for individual life and for personal dealings, while politics has for its sphere all public affairs. But this still will not do. Everyone recognises that some, at least, of the rules of morality apply to political affairs, and it would be universally regarded as specially shocking if a man who made any special profession of Christianity broke one of those moral rules in his public life. So it appears that the public conscience regards religion as having some bearing on public action.

But it may be answered that what is now in discussion is not really a political question but the personal action of a politician. Christianity does require that a politician should not tell lies; but it does not require that he should believe in either aristocracy or democracy. This brings us to the vital point.

What chiefly gives importance to a constitution is its moral influence. We find the constitution of our country already established when we begin to think at all, and we tend to take it for granted. Those who attack it or desire radically to alter it, we tend to dismiss as rebels or even traitors. We suppose that they object to it because it does not give them as much of something—power, position, wealth—as they would like to have. And of course it is true that this is a fair account of a considerable number of those who at any time try to alter

the Constitution. But it is not true of all. A great part of the complaint against the existing order of society is based on moral principles. That order is accused of injustice, and the charge is brought, not only by those who think themselves defrauded of the share of the world's wealth to which they are properly entitled, but also by some who hold that the injustice of the social order breeds an indifference to real justice in those who live under it, to the damage of their immortal souls. The social order is accused of selfishness, not only by those who hold that they have been oppressed, but also by others who think that it breeds selfishness in those who live under it, to the damage of their immortal souls.

What, after all, is the origin of a constitution or social order. It grew; yes, but not out of nothing. It grew out of the way in which the citizens regarded life and out of their desires in respect of it. If it hedges about property with great securities, that is because the citizens have attached great importance to the security of property. So the constitution is a monument of the convictions of the citizens with regard to what things are important; it grows out of, and expresses, their conception of value. But then it proceeds to inculcate that same conception on the minds and characters of those who grow up under it. It is therefore a stereotyping influence. And if the view of life which it tends to stereotype is other than the Christian view, then between it and Christianity there is a conflict of principle.

To illustrate this point we may take a simplified instance. If a state gave rank exclusively for military distinction—as ancient Sparta came near to doing,—that would at once indicate the fact that the citizens paid supreme honour to military service, and would also lead successive generations of citizens to believe that military service was the one thing seriously worth attempting. As this would be the implanting of a false scale of values, it would be distorting to the minds and characters of the citizens; and for that reason it would be a bad constitution. If, again, great power and honour and rank are given to those who possess vast sums of money, this indicates a false view of life in the citizens and also tends to

perpetuate that false view in successive generations of citizens ; it is therefore a bad system of society.

It is of course not just those charges that are brought against our present social order, though the second would not be at all without foundation. The charge brought against it is that it represents and encourages both self-seeking and indifference to justice and fellowship. The details of this charge we must consider in the next chapter. It is the principle on which it rests that concerns us here. Christians are bound to be concerned with the form of the constitution and the established institutions of society, because they are concerned with all that helps or hinders the bringing of men to see the world as God sees it, and to adopt that scale of values which is appropriate to the heirs of an eternal destiny.

So the Christian will always include, among the questions by which he tests a constitution, the inquiry what sort of character it tends to produce in the citizens. The prevalent form of constitution to-day is Democracy. How does Democracy meet this test ? The question is not " Does it at present work well ? " though that is a fundamentally important question in its own place ; indeed, unless it works fairly well in actual practice no other claims on its behalf could justify its establishment. Nor, again, is the question " Is the majority always right ? " For there can be no doubt that the majority is not always right. The truth about this can be affirmed with some confidence ; the majority is seldom utterly wrong, and is usually right on broad issues ; and it is more likely to be right than any particular minority ; but it is pretty certain that the people who are nearest to a really true and exact apprehension at any given time are a minority. No ; the defence of Democracy is not its immediate efficiency but its educative effect in expanding the personality of each individual citizen by the gift of responsibility. It is a good thing to give citizens the vote as soon as they are in the least degree ready for it, not because they are wise and will vote right, which is a very precarious proposition, but because thinking how to vote will make them wiser than they are.

The root of Democracy is reverence for personality wherever it is found ; and this, as we shall see later, is a principle of the Gospel. And when Democracy is true to its own root principle it is the highest type of constitution ; it is capable of promoting the fullest and completest personal development. But Democracy is liable to two diseases, each of which is fatal to its spiritual value. One of these is the love of power, which leads majorities to tyrannise over minorities or isolated individuals. This is a very familiar fact. Revolutionaries have been fond of proclaiming Liberty and Equality, as if they were twin principles. But, in fact, they kill each other, unless by Equality we mean identity of ultimate worth in the sight of God and equality of opportunity for men to be themselves ; in that case Equality is only another name for real Liberty. If, however, it means the equal right of everyone to discharge every function, it can only be maintained by a tyranny of the average (or even of the mob), suppressing all forms of real distinction. Democracy does involve Liberty, because Liberty is respect for personality. And it will respect this, if it is healthy, in minorities and even in cranks. When the herd instinct grows strong, and the Public School or the Trade Union persecutes the member who holds unpopular opinions, Democracy is in principle destroyed ; for the only reason why the majority or herd should be attended to is that each member of it has the same right to an opinion which the unpopular member also has. Mob-tyranny is one disease of Democracy, and a fatal one.

Its other disease is individual self-assertion. An aristocracy is relatively free from this. Under a feudal system it is no use for the yeoman to wish he were the Lord of the Manor ; he isn't ; and there is no more to be said, or thought, or felt, about it. So he is free from the temptation to aggressive self-assertion ; but, being untempted, his humility in accepting his status has little virtue in it. Democracy seeks to give equal opportunity ; and then the door is open to self-assertion, pushfulness, competitive rivalry, which does harm to those who are defeated in the struggle by making them

bitter and envious, and still greater harm to those who are successful by making them self-complacent and proud. This disease is not politically destructive of Democracy as the other is ; but it is even more deleterious to character.

Yet a Democracy is conceivable and possible where there is real respect for every man's conscience, and where all use their freedom, not to advance their own worldly interests, but to render the particular form of service for which their own gifts qualify them. Even in our own Democracy there are traces of such a thing ; but the two diseases which have been mentioned are both conspicuous. The real test is—Do the citizens think most of their rights or of their duties ? Where concern for rights is uppermost, men will fight to protect them, majorities will be tyrannous and self-assertion will be rife. Where concern for duties is uppermost, Democracy will be healthy. And in health or disease, it will impose its qualities on those who grow up under it.

But what has been said amounts to a declaration that Democracy is wholesome in the degree in which it rests on Christian principle. If so, there is a clear call for Christians in any modern state to do all in their power to leaven political life with the Christian spirit.

The Christian, then, is likely to regard Democracy, rightly based, as the best form of constitution for those who are ready to shoulder its responsibility. Whether or not any particular nation is in this sense ready for it is a matter of judgment on which the Gospel throws no light. How far in any particular country which is broadly democratic certain aristocratic elements should be retained is a similar question of judgment on which opinions may well differ. But that Democracy, if and so far as it is established, needs to be kept true to its own root principle by constant vigilance and effort is not an open question. Democracy, where citizens are ready for it, is the best constitution if, but only if, Christian citizens are taking care to keep it true to its own root principle of respect for personality, which is itself a Christian principle.

CHAPTER VI

DISCIPLESHIP AND ECONOMICS

MANY will find no difficulty in assenting to the general doctrine outlined in the last chapter, who will yet say that when we come to economic questions it is necessary to call a halt. However true it be that we are in duty bound to maintain the Christian spirit and temper in economic questions, they will still say that here there can be no question of applying Christian principles, for we enter here an independent region with laws of its own. Those laws are fixed and immutable, it is said, like the laws of mechanics ; they are set forth by the exact science called Political Economy ; and Christianity has no more to do with them than it has with Geometry. The Christian will, of course, use any knowledge of Geometry he has for purposes of general benefit, if he gets the chance ; so he will use his knowledge of Economic Laws ; but he is not to suppose that those laws can be modified at the dictates of the Christian conscience.

Undoubtedly there is some truth in this contention, though it is very much less than is generally supposed by those who advance it. It is generally supposed by those who state this view that it condemns all attempt to modify the existing economic structure of society in the light of Christian principles. Those principles are regarded as having no relevance in this field at all, just as they have no relevance to the question to how many right angles the internal angles of a triangle are equal.

If this is indeed so, it seems singularly unfortunate, because the educative power, for good and evil, of the social order of a country is at its height in the economic system of that

country. Professor Marshall, the greatest of "orthodox" economists in the period just ended, no socialist, nor sociologist of the collectivist school, but a student of Political Economy on classical lines, declared that the two greatest influences moulding character are religion and the economic structure of society. If that is true, it is in the last degree regrettable that the economic structure of society should be incapable of adaptation to Christian principles, should it ever appear to be influencing character in an un-Christian direction.

And that is precisely what it is doing. Would any observer of our social and industrial life, who observed it with a view to drawing inferences about our fundamental beliefs, find himself led to a conviction that we believed in human brotherhood under the universal Fatherhood of God? Or will any boy, thrown out of our educational system at fourteen years of age, roaming the streets perhaps for two or three years and picking up what odd jobs he can, come to the conclusion that human life is one great family affair, in which the mutual obligations of membership in the one family are the supreme and decisive factors? Of course, he finds that he must fend for himself if he is not to perish—everyone expects it of him; he must seize the job that offers before his own best friend, and leave that friend still desperate; all the way through life, he must put Number One first, and the rest nowhere. These are the lessons which our actual social arrangements are inculcating upon tens of thousands day after day; and this practical instruction has a force in the moulding of character that no amount of exhortation can equal.

That, perhaps, is the extreme case. But does the capitalist employer find any encouragement to unselfishness in his financial policy? Does the Trade Unionist? Or the casual worker? They are all in the grip of a system; and that system not only settles their policy, but, through the conduct that it imposes on them, does a good deal to determine their character. Of course, it is not the only influence. All the more personal influences are also at work: home and parents, school and church, friends and heroes. These may go far in counter-

acting the effects of the economic system, and sometimes undo its ill effects completely. The point is that they have to work against it and cannot claim it as an ally.

Before going further we must mention some qualifications, so that we may avoid exaggeration or distortion. Sometimes our present social system is called anti-Christian. I cannot call it that. It has some features which are antagonistic to Christianity; and it is these which are in view at the present moment. But, taken as a whole, it ought not to be so described. In countless ways it is marked by the influence of Christianity upon it. Let anyone who doubts that compare it with the civilisation of those countries which have hardly been touched by Christian influence. Moreover, the ground on which this charge against our civilisation rests is not the real or the whole truth. Our industrial order is represented as purely competitive, a scene of endless conflict—firm against firm, labour against capital. But this is grossly inaccurate. There are far-reaching modifications of this competitive quality of the existing order which are familiar to every student of social problems; and they become constantly more important.

But if our industrial order cannot be condemned as "anti-Christian," we cannot deny that it is "un-Christian" in the sense of being less than fully Christian. There are un-Christian features in it—and chief of these is its emphasis on and stimulation of the self-regarding motives. It is simply not true that no other motives find scope in industry. The joy of creation, the joy of efficient organisation, the joy of team-work, the joy of service are all real facts in industry as it is. But it is quite true that self-interest in nearly all branches overtops them all, and in some branches is so predominant that the others have hardly any place at all. And the question confronting us is the question whether this is really necessary, or whether we cannot by deliberate effort transform industry from an opponent of Christian influence to an ally in its effect on the character of those who are engaged in it.

Now it is quite true that we cannot eliminate the struggle for existence. But we must not compare the economic with the

physical realm as a sphere provided by Providence for (amongst other things) the training of our characters through the struggle against it which is necessary to life or progress. There has always been and will always be a struggle for existence against Nature. Even if all human relationships were co-ordinated into harmonious co-operation, it would still be true that the resources of Nature would be available for man's sustenance and enjoyment only as the result of his toil. But the struggle against Nature does not develop selfishness, because Nature is not another conscious being whom we deprive of what we take for ourselves. It is the struggle against other men that makes us selfish, for it teaches us to see our claims and interests as antagonistic to theirs, and to prefer ours to theirs. If this struggle becomes the dominant factor in a man's life, that is a great stumbling-block in the way of his finding his true life in fellowship with God, who is Love. And to know of the existence of stumbling-blocks without trying to remove them must incur some of the condemnation pronounced on those who actually place them where they will catch men's feet. We are bound at least to inquire whether this economic structure which exercises so powerful an influence partly for evil may not be so remodelled as to exercise that influence for good.

First, then, let us recognise fully and freely that there are some Economic Laws which are as fixed and rigid as the Laws of Physics. For example—you cannot distribute wealth which has not been produced ; or, again, you cannot indefinitely carry on any business at a loss. But it will be noticed that these are the logical and mathematical aspects of Economics, not the social or moral aspects. When we turn to these, we find no such inherent necessity. The chief of them all is the Law of Supply and Demand ; price rises when Supply is small and Demand is great ; it falls when Supply is great and Demand is small. This is in fact observed to happen ; but it need not happen. Suppose I am selling tennis-balls. I have two thousand left ; the season is far advanced ; I know there will be only a slight demand before it closes. I reduce the price,

to induce more people to buy, because it is better for me to get some return on as much of my stock and original outlay as possible than to be left with unsold goods on my hands. But a purchaser might appear who said: "No; you paid so much for the balls, and the standard rate of profit is so and so. I am not entitled to get these balls cheap merely because you have a large stock left in hand; I prefer to pay the full price and so secure for you your full profit." This may not be a very usual sort of purchaser; he may not exist at all; but he is not impossible. And, in fact, there are many people who, in certain circumstances, will insist on paying a fair price, even though they could obtain what they want for less.

We may similarly illustrate the contrary movement of price. This time we imagine that it is the beginning of the season. I have laid in two thousand balls, and directly after my order is delivered there is a strike among the makers of balls, so that no one else in the neighbourhood can lay in any stock at all. I can, if I choose, put up the price; people will want the balls enough to pay more for them if I choose to charge more. But I am perfectly able to say, "No; the shortage of balls does not alter the price I paid to the manufacturer. I am entitled to the standard rate of profit, but there is no reason why I should have more merely because people might be ready to pay more. I will sell at the usual price." And this procedure, too, is not unheard of. My own tailor happened to have laid in a large supply of cloth just before the war. With the outbreak of war the price went up, because, owing to the orders for uniforms, the supply of ordinary stock was reduced. He could quite well have taken advantage of this and charged at the higher rate for what he had bought at the lower rate. But he did not do it. He continued to supply his old customers at the same rate, so far as concerned price of cloth, as before the war. Perhaps it paid him; I hope it did. But he was defying the Law of Supply and Demand; and if he not only did this, but did it profitably, it proves that that law is by no means fixed and immutable.

The plain fact is that the relation between Supply and

Demand does not of itself raise or reduce prices. What does this is the human will. But it has been broadly true, though never completely true, that the people engaged in commerce and industry are there for what they can get. The Political Economists have as a rule assumed this; and they have inferred from it that every man will always sell as dear as he can, and buy as cheap as he can. This again is broadly true: yet there are many exceptions. But this means that the whole system of economic science rests on a hypothesis which is not universally true, and need not be true at all—the hypothesis that in business every man is "on the make." It is mainly true; and therefore the deductions of the economists are broadly valid as an outline statement of the facts. But if a new spirit came into people, so that they cared more for mutual help than for individual gain, this would lead to a wholly different set of economic laws. For those laws are general statements about the action of men's wills, which are subject to moral principle and can be changed by divine grace.

Such a change is a great and difficult matter, no doubt. But it would not represent a greater transformation than is represented by the contrast between the age which exposed to death unwanted infants and an age which supplies hospitals by charity for the free treatment of poor patients of all ages. It would be a great change, and therefore we need all the power of the Church to be directed to its accomplishment; but it is not impossible.

The Christian remedy for the ills of society is fundamental, and therefore it is scarcely ever possible to apply it as a solution of actual disputes when they arise. A man once asked Our Lord to arbitrate in a dispute about the division of an inheritance. But Our Lord refused; He said, in effect, that it was not His business to settle disputes when once they had arisen, but He would show them how to avoid having a dispute: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." So very often Christians are abused because they cannot come forward with a ready-made solution of a problem which has arisen between people who are in an unchristian temper. It is no business

of the Church to settle such matters ; for that kind of settlement what is wanted is detailed knowledge of the facts, a clear head, and detachment from the interests involved. These are the qualities of the Judge. A Christian may or may not have them ; the man who has them may or may not be a Christian. But the Gospel has no direct application at that moment ; the Gospel tells the parties to love each other, and how they can learn to do this—by opening their hearts to the love of God, the Father of all, displayed in Jesus Christ. But if they say, " We don't want to love each other ; we want each to have our rights and then to have no more to do with each other," the Gospel will not help them except by telling them that they are pursuing a false hope. They will never be satisfied with any award ; and even if they could be assured that what they receive is just, it would bring no lasting satisfaction ; for what men's souls really desire is not justice as between people who are indifferent to one another, but love which ends that indifference and unites them in fellowship.

This is the Church's fundamental contribution to the solution of social problems. Of course partisans become impatient with it. They ask us on which side we stand, and unless we declare for their side they tell us that we are useless, or worse. We are certainly useless for the purpose of helping one party to beat the other party ; our use is for making each party regard the other as comrades and allies. But at this point our trouble with the social system appears again. For if life is so organised that (for example) the gain of Labour means, for ten years or so, if not in the very long run, the loss of Capital, and if Labour is justly entitled to earn more while Capital cannot afford to pay more, the proclamation of mere goodwill becomes sentimental—that is to say, it is the indulgence in amiable feelings detached from actual practice. And while it would still be right to point to goodwill as the fundamental need, if the Church has no principles to offer whereby this goal may be pursued, it would be tactful to confine such vague propaganda to times of peace, for when a conflict is raging that kind of talk is peculiarly irritating, and produces more bitterness than it

allays. If we are to promote goodwill, we must have something to say over and above laudation of goodwill. Has the Gospel any further help? Does it contain any principles capable of, and demanding, application to the structure of society.

Yes; there are at least four. I propose to state them, and very briefly to illustrate them. But for a fuller treatment of the principles and their application I must refer to the twelve Reports presented to the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship, held at Birmingham in April 1924.[1]

First of Christian social principles is *the sacredness of Personality*. Our Lord's respect for the personal will of every human being is plainly fundamental to His whole treatment of men and women. This principle is, in Politics, called Liberty; but Liberty has often been thought of negatively, as a mere non-interference with people. The Christian principle goes further, and involves positive respect for them in the exercise of their personal activities—thought, speech, conduct. Can it be said that our existing social order rests on any such principle? Above all, do our educational facilities express it? Of course we have been steadily moving in the right direction; but we have a long way to go before it can be said that every boy or girl receives all in the expansion and development of personality through education that he or she could profit by.

In the industrial sphere there is one application of this principle which is of supreme importance. In the older textbooks on Political Economy you will find what is called the "commodity theory of labour": that is, that labour is a commodity like any other, and its price is to be determined by the laws of supply and demand; the labourer would sell his labour as dear as he could, that is for the highest possible wages, while the employer would buy it as cheap as he could, that is for the lowest possible wages. Now this theory ignores the fact that all other commodities are separable from the person who supplies them, but labour is not. If I buy a pair of boots I do not buy the bootmaker. But if I buy a

[1] "Copec Reports," Longmans.

man's labour, I must have the man himself, and not his body only but his mind also. To buy so much of a man's labour is to buy that man for so much of the day. If, then, I treat labour as a commodity, I am treating the labourer as a commodity—a " living instrument." And " living instrument " is Aristotle's definition of a slave. Modern industry is not now based on the " commodity-theory of labour " ; in a multitude of ways it has been discarded. But it could not be said that we have yet adopted any other principle in its place. We are drifting without any principles, and that is the source of the perpetual unrest.

The second Christian social principle follows at once to correct a possible distortion of the first : this second principle is *Fellow-membership*. The individual, whose free exercise of his personal activities others are to respect, must not use this liberty as an opportunity for pushing his own interests. He is a fellow-member in God's family with all others ; he must use his liberty in pursuit of the general good. He is free from coercion only to be the more completely subject to moral obligation. How far can it be said that children are really impressed with this view of life as their characters are forming ? Schools on the whole attempt to inculcate it, but parents and uncles and aunts and cousins are much more disposed to refer to education as providing a chance to follow a lucrative career. No doubt they often think of the other side of things ; but they are half-hearted about it ; consequently they could only speak of it rather priggishly, and consequently, again, they shrink from speaking of it at all. But it is quite easy to be natural and downright in asserting the moral view. If a boy says he sees his way to make a pile, don't answer with wonderings whether there are not more valuable things than money ; say something like, " And who do you expect to be the better for that ? " or shorter still, " And what good will that do ? " Anyhow, what we want is an articulate public opinion that believes that we are really and truly members one of another.

Out of these two comes the third principle : *the duty of Service*. If I am to be free, but to regard myself not as an

isolated individual but as a member of a community, it means that my life must be devoted to service. There is hardly any occupation by which men can get their living that is not in itself an act of service. We should not get paid for what we do, if no one wanted us to do it. But by no means everyone regards his daily occupation as his sphere of service. Many, perhaps most, regard it as their way of doing the best they can for themselves. There is nothing, I believe, that would so profoundly modify society as the growth of a sense that every " calling " is in literal truth a calling—a vocation—and is to be followed as the chief means by which we render service. If that took place we should no longer have people buying as cheap as they can and selling as dear as they can. We should have people who wish to pay the fair price and refuse to take more than the fair price. And with that would come a revolution in Political Economy. But we must not take out the mainspring of industry and commerce as they are until there is another ready to take its place. The change must be gradual ; but, if Christianity is to prevail, it must come.

Most characteristic of all is the fourth principle : *the power of Sacrifice*. The Gospel proclaims that God is Love. If so, then Love is the root fact of reality. And the way to progress is not by the force which imposes on men what they resent, but by the sacrifice which wins them to a willing acceptance. There are two kinds of victory. There is the victory of Pride, won by force over beaten enemies ; and it brings no peace ; it brings the bitterness of defeat, the waiting for revenge, the renewal of the conflict when strength is restored. And there is the victory of Love, won by sacrifice over enemies who are by that sacrifice converted into friends. This is the only sort of victory that God cares to win ; to win such a victory He " endured the cross in scorn of contempt." But He is not a remote person watching the world ; He is the root fact of reality, the inner life of human history. Progress can only come in His way. You cannot prepare for the Kingdom of Heaven by fighting for it—only by suffering for it. Progress comes by sacrifice, not by force.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

EVERY generation finds something in the Gospel which is of special importance to itself and seems to have been overlooked in the previous age or (sometimes) in all previous ages of the Church. The great discovery of the age in which we live is the immense prominence given in the Gospel to the Kingdom of God. To us it is quite extraordinary that it figures so little in the theology and religious writings of almost the entire period of Christian history. Certainly in the Synoptic Gospels it has a prominence that could hardly be increased.

The phrase in the original Greek can mean either the Kingdom of God or the Reign of God ; and the thought for which this phrase stands plainly includes both. As Kingdom it is a commonwealth, a social organism deriving its life from God who rules it. As Reign it is the power exercised by God over men who accept the privilege and responsibility of being His subjects. So sometimes it is purely spiritual, individual, internal ; sometimes it is organic, collective, extensive. Its completion is the fellowship of all men with one another through their individual surrender of themselves to God. That is far off, though always " at hand," for the moment that all men " repented " (that is, adopted God's outlook on the world) it would be here. The completion of universal " repentance " and the Coming of the Kingdom are identically the same thing.

Meanwhile some " repent," or " are converted," and not others. And those who repent do so in very varying degrees. Thus appears the historic society known as the Church. The essence of the Church, as we saw in Chapter III, is the Life

of Christ at work in His disciples, welding them into that Fellowship of the Holy Ghost which is His Body. But historically this is obscured by the incompleteness of our repentance. We only half turn to God. We are children of the Second Adam, living under the influence of the Divine Life given to mankind in Jesus Christ. But we are also children of the First Adam, not at all completely excluding the influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Consequently the real and essential Church is obscured ; it is like a brilliant light in a shrouded lantern ; the light is there, but only some of it comes through. A lantern there must be, to lift the light and throw it on to the dark places which need its illumination. So the true Church is the lantern with the light inside it ; but the shrouds which hang over the lantern are no part of the Church.

Naturally we cannot expect the world outside to draw distinctions of this kind ; and as a result of our unfaithfulness they criticise and condemn the Holy Church. People talk about the " failure of the Church." Such a thing can happen ; God may be, for a time, defeated, though He always turns defeat itself into victory. Whenever I commit sin, that is, so far as it goes, defeat for God. He has allowed my will to assert itself against His. Because He allowed it, it was not mere defeat ; but because His will was successfully resisted there was defeat in it. And so the Church may shed forth the pure light of the Gospel undimmed, and men may still reject it as they rejected Christ Himself. It is quite superstitious to suppose that if Christians proclaimed and lived by the true Gospel, the world would at once accept it. The Church, the true Church, which is Christ in His members, may suffer failure for a time. But for the most part what men mean when they speak of the failure of the Church is not really a failure of the Church at all ; it is our failure to be the Church. The Church is the Body of Christ, the organism which moves spontaneously in obedience to His will ; so far as that is not true of us, we are failing to be the Church. If that failure became complete, there would be no Church—no Body of Christ—at all, but only

a mass of paralysed limbs, only a heap of branches severed from the Vine and ready for burning. But in the worst days it has never been complete ; nor can we believe that God would ever let it be so.

We are not maintaining that the true Church is invisible ; it may sometimes be concealed, and therefore unseen. But it is not invisible. It is in itself the most visible thing there is. The outward form or organisation by which it appears in the world is not a thing irrelevant but is essential. The Church is not a spirit, not even the Holy Spirit. It is an embodiment of the Spirit, and all the essential parts of its organic life are essential to the Church. What is not part of the true Church is just the sin of the men and women who are members of the Church, to which they still cling.

But having made this clear—and indeed it is most important to be clear about it—we may for convenience adopt the common use of language and use the name of the Church to denote the historic society within which the true Church is partly concealed—the society which corresponds to the shrouded lantern, shrouds and all. And we have to ask what is the relation of this society to the Kingdom of God with which Our Lord's teaching is so largely occupied.

This question has been complicated by the fact that very divergent answers have been given to it, and have for long been taken for granted among different groups of Christians. Largely under the influence of St Augustine men learnt at one time to identify the Kingdom with the historic Church. Later, under the individualistic influences of the Reformation, many began to think of the Kingdom either as the reign of God over the individual soul, or to identify it with the " Heaven " to which they looked forward after death. Both of these later interpretations distinguished it from the historic Church, but they also obliterated all thought of it as a commonwealth. At the beginning of this chapter we saw that the original thought in some fashion combines these different elements. We must now try to see how in fact they fit together.

There are three terms that we shall need, if we are to keep distinct three aspects of the subject, which are all vital, all different, and all mutually connected : the Church, Christendom, the Kingdom. It is partly through the omission of the second of these from our thinking in recent years that we have become confused. The Church is the fellowship of Christ's disciples, welded together by the operation of His Spirit within them into the organised society which is His Body. It may contain a small or a large proportion of the citizens of any country where it works. Its own distinctive activity is worship, the imparting and receiving of the Word and Sacraments, and the self-dedication of its members to His service in the world. As they thus serve Him, they leaven society ; and so there grows up a whole civilisation which is in greater or less degree Christian, in the sense that it is moulded by the principles of the Gospel. This takes place in many countries ; and those countries form Christendom. The Church is not the nations, though the nations are within the Church. The difference between them is not in membership but in function. It is still the business of the Church to inspire ; it is the business of the nations and their citizens to act on that inspiration in the various affairs of life. If we can imagine all men and women to be (1) perfectly dedicated to God through their worship, and (2) perfectly responsive to His will in their citizenship, that would be the completed Kingdom of God. The Kingdom, in its completeness, is a Christendom extended to include all mankind, utterly leavened by a Church consisting of perfectly converted members. The necessary factors in this result are : (1) the conversion of all the world to Christianity ; (2) perfect self-dedication in all who are so converted ; (3) absolute correspondence of life, private and public, with that self-dedication ; (4) a resultant world-wide fellowship of men united in the love of God. That, and nothing less, is what we are plainly taught to pray for, in the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

At first, of course, there was no Christendom, only a Church at work in many nations. Perhaps the earliest

date at which it is safe to speak of Christendom is 800 A.D., when Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor. It was a Christendom not very thoroughly leavened by the Church ; but there was the sense of a real community among those peoples in whom the leaven was at work. A few centuries later we find fully developed the great mediæval theory, according to which Church and State are two aspects of the one Christian society : all citizens, of course, were members of both, and all were concerned in the activity of both. But some men were specialised for one set of functions and were called Churchmen ; others, specialised for the other set of functions, might have been called Statesmen, but, in fact, owing to the Church's monopoly of education, it was usually necessary to get a Churchman to do the State's business ; consequently on that side the distinctive name did not come into common use.

This last consideration was partly responsible for the great failure, for it led to a confusion of the two functions. When Hildebrand asserted the supremacy of the Church over all States, he was insisting on a most profound truth—the same truth which Plato asserted when he said that the world would have no rest from its troubles till kings became philosophers or philosophers became kings. The truth on which they were insisting was this : that secular affairs can only be rightly ordered when they are ordered according to eternal truth. In the Gospel the eternal truth is disclosed. The world will escape from its evils when its affairs are conducted in the spirit, and on the principles, of the Gospel. That is true ; and there is for our age no more important truth. But Hildebrand and his successors interpreted it as meaning that the Statesman must obey the actual direction of the Churchman, and, above all, that the Kings of the earth, even the Emperor, must obey the Pope. That is the meaning of Canossa, where the Emperor waited in the snow till the Pope was pleased to receive him. It is balanced in history by Anagni, where the emissaries of a king kidnapped the person of that Pope, Boniface VIII, who gave the most emphatic utterance to the

most exalted claims ever put forward by the Papacy on behalf of the Church. That it should be so balanced in fact is a small matter ; the great matter is that it deserved to be. For by exerting political authority the Church descended from the spiritual plane, and took its stand on a level with the purely political organisations. To claim to be an overlord is to claim to be a lord ; and the claim of the Church ought to be that of its Master whose Body it is : " I am among you as he that serveth."

The whole character of the Middle Ages is a headlong idealism which tried to reach its goal without making the necessary preparation or submitting to the necessary discipline. So the Church tried to dragoon the world into the Kingdom. It failed, and deserved to fail ; for such regimenting of the spiritual life is clean contrary to the Gospel. But the worst part of the failure was its own degradation of itself. If the worst corruptions, such as are associated with the Borgia Pope, Alexander VI, are to be attributed to individual vice, yet the scandal of Julius II riding as Pope at the head of his own troops was really implied in the Hildebrandine programme from the outset. No doubt Hildebrand, when he became Gregory VII, or Innocent III, the greatest of all the Popes, refrained from such an expression of their theory, just as Bismarck would never risk the antagonism of Great Britain by adding sea-power to Germany's continental predominance. Yet Gregory VII and Innocent III were responsible for Julius II, for the loss of spiritual authority in the Church, and for the disruptions of the Reformation, as surely as the principles of Bismarck led Germany towards 1918.

Inevitably that great failure largely discredited the goa that was in view. As the moral authority of the Church waned, men began to think of States as ends in themselves. There was apparently no recipient for a nation's homage ; surely, men thought, the nation can serve nothing but itself. So began the Idolatry of the State, of which Machiavelli is the prophet. It has been the national religion of all Europe from the days of Cæsar Borgia, whom he glorified, till now. It is

not a base or self-indulgent religion—sometimes it is very austere; it calls for heroic self-sacrifice; but it is always destructive, for it leads to war, and its thanksgivings are chiefly for victories over others. Its greatest and worst achievement has been the destruction of Christendom. With the increase of nationalism, the sense of unity among the Christian nations has declined. With the "emancipation," more properly described as the divorce, of politics from religion, the very sense of a "Christian nation" has declined. Nations are now commonly regarded, as they were in the old pagan world, as purely secular groups, having no concern except to push their own interests. It is true that they are coming to find that their true interest is a common interest, and that unlimited rivalry spoils life for them all. So they are brought to the necessity for a League of Nations. But Christians know that the disasters which have brought them to this are God's judgments on their selfish policies, being the consequences which by His laws of nature inevitably ensue upon such selfishness. So the nations learn by judgment what they would not learn by love: that we are members one of another.

It may be that we are to be permitted to grope our way back to something like a Christian civilisation. It may be, on the other hand, that persistent selfishness—individual, sectional, national, racial—will bring about an "end of the world." It is very doubtful whether Europe has any future. Perhaps it has contributed to the progress of mankind all that its obstinate selfishness and rapacity allow it to contribute; and if it will not repent of these, its end is likely to be near. But whether through a series of dislocations and adjustments, or through a catastrophe which overwhelms civilisation as we know it, the duty of the Church and of its members is clear. We have to work out again the social principles of the Gospel; we must hope to be able to offer to the distracted world a Christian sociology which all Christians agree to propagate. That is by no means so hopeless a task as might be imagined by those who have not discovered by study the exceedingly

impressive unanimity on most points that has been reached by Christians who have really studied the matter. I would refer to four utterances which it is interesting to compare. First comes the great and noble Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*; then the Report of the Commission of Inquiry, appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, on *Christianity and Industrial Problems*; thirdly, there is the Report of the Inter-denominational Committee on "After-War Problems in the United States of America," called *Christianity and Industrial Reconstruction*; fourthly, the "Copec Report" on *Property and Industry*. All of these are representative deliverances by representative persons or bodies; and while, of course, there are differences, the agreement is startling. But the work is still in its early stages, and the number of Christians taking any part in it is still very small; most have hardly heard of it, and many, when they do hear of it, denounce it as a secularising of religion. That denunciation is partly a misunderstanding, partly a true and valuable warning. It is misunderstanding so far as it assumes that Christian students of these topics aspire to giving directions to men engaged in the various departments of life; it is a valuable warning inasmuch as any such endeavour does expose the Church to the temptation to repeat its mediæval blunder and make itself a political power instead of a spiritual influence.

But that does not exhaust our duty. We must indeed try to reconstruct the science of Christian sociology, and we must hope to be agreed on its main principles. But besides that we must go as individual Christians into the arena of industrial and political life, carrying those principles with us, and applying them to the actual facts and problems to the best of our ability; and here we must not expect agreement. There is plenty of room for honest difference of opinion as regards the best way to apply Christian principles to actual conditions, and for that reason the Church should never endorse a particular political programme, nor become a political party, nor be attached to a political party. The Church collectively must

proclaim, and also must confine itself to, principles. But it should also impel its members to work through all the political parties, as their judgment may guide them, to secure the application of those principles. Everyone of us who profess and call ourselves Christians ought to be trying to think out for ourselves how we may conduct our own affairs on Christian lines, and how we may use our vote to promote the application of Christian principles. So, in the various parties, the different fragments of wisdom acquired by each will be combined under the impulse of the Christian spirit to bring a contribution to Christian civilisation.

Thus the Church, whether its membership be co-extensive with that of the nations or not, will steadily build up again an international Christian civilisation, making Christendom once more a vital factor in the history of mankind. As this work proceeds, and Christendom comes to include more and more of the nations of the world, the Kingdom of God is seen to be coming. Whether it fully comes in this world or not is a matter of small consequence. Its principles are the same, here or elsewhere. And if, as life dies out on the earth, as it sinks towards the cold silence of the moon, the ideal is still unrealised, yet man by God's gift has still the infinite years before him, and there, if not here, then, if not now, we shall see the fulfilment of God's eternal purpose to sum up all things in Christ.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRIMARY NEED—CONVERSION

THE Church, then, is not identical with the Kingdom of God, but it exists to be the earnest—the first-fruits—of the Kingdom, and its distinctive life is the life of the Kingdom. It is, so to speak, an outpost of the Kingdom thrust forward in the world, and endowed with all the powers of the Kingdom to subdue the world and bring the world into it. But where do these powers reside? To that question there can be but one answer. They reside in the souls of converted individuals. There is nowhere else.

There is a great and inevitable danger attendant upon the effort to take the wide view of religious activity which I have outlined. The tasks are so utterly beyond our capacity, the problems are so utterly beyond our comprehension, that we tend to look at them with exhilaration or dismay according to our temperament, but in either case to feel no personal responsibility. We think of the Unemployed, and wish the Government would do something; we think of the peril of another war, and wish the League of Nations would do something. We ignore the fact that Government and League of Nations are alike mere engines; they can do a great deal if they are supplied with steam; but without steam they are mere dead mechanism. And the steam is public opinion; and public opinion is made up of *our* ideas and *our* expression of those ideas. Wars are made in drawing-rooms and in Pall Mall Clubs. Unemployment is made, to some extent at least, by extravagant expenditure on the Riviera. *We* are the social problem; *we* are the source of calamity. If the world is to have rest, *we* must be converted and repent.

It daily becomes more apparent that God's respect for the freedom of our affections, thoughts, and purposes is complete. It is part of that respect for our freedom that He never forces upon us His own gifts. He offers them, but unless we actively accept them, they remain ineffective as far as we are concerned. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock"—that is always the relation of God our Redeemer to our souls. He has paid the whole price; He has suffered the atoning Death; yet still He waits till we open the door of our hearts to let in His love which will call our love out. He never breaks down that door. He stands and knocks. And this is true not only of His first demand for admission to the mansion of the soul; it is true also of every room within that mansion. There are many of us who have opened the front door to Him, but have only let Him into the corridors and staircases; all the rooms where we work or amuse ourselves are still closed against Him. There are still greater multitudes who have welcomed Him to some rooms, and hope He will not ask what goes on behind the doors of others. But sooner or later He asks; and if we do not at once take Him to see, He leaves the room where we were so comfortable with Him, and stands knocking at the closed door. And then we can never again have the joy of His presence in the first room until we open the door at which He is now knocking. We can only have Him with us in the room that we choose for Him, if we really make Him free of all the house.

Who that is a Christian at all is not familiar with this experience? We have welcomed Christ to our hearts. In our prayers we find Him present, in our intercourse with our friends, in our daily work, in our holidays: all is delightful, and His Presence hallows all. Then one day He says, "There is one room in your house I have never been into, and when I pass the door is always shut; do let Me see it." Perhaps it is the room where we keep certain desires that we will not abandon and dare not display; perhaps it is where we keep an old grudge, that plays no real part in our life now, but we won't part with it; perhaps it is where we keep a selfish

ambition that we secretly pursue, though we never avow it; perhaps it is where we keep our political prejudice or our patriotic pride; perhaps again it was designed by the Divine Architect who planned the house to be the special home of our sympathy for the poor, or for the unconverted heathen and the backward races, and it has been left empty. But when once the Lord has asked to see that room, we can never have His companionship in the rest of our lives again until we open the door of it to admit Him. There He will stand and knock. We go away to our work and our fun, hoping still to find Him in the room we had prepared for Him and took pains to keep bright and clean for Him. But He is no longer there. He is standing at that closed door—knocking, knocking.

The literal way of stating what I have tried to suggest in parable is this: God offers to us Himself, His whole Self to our whole selves. He is not unwilling for us to receive Him by stages into our lives—first into our prayers, perhaps, then to our family life, then to our friendships, then to our recreation, then to our work, then to our citizenship, then to our patriotism. But His offer is of His whole Self to our whole selves; and if at any stage we block the way, His Presence from the rest of life is at once withdrawn. It is not true that He must from the first have absolute control of us if He is to accept any control at all. We have abundant experience in ourselves and others of utterly genuine devotion which only covers a part of life and yet is manifestly received and blessed by God. It is sometimes said that "Christ must be King of all or He is not King at all." That is true in the long run, but only in the long run. In His great mercy to us He is willing to be received first into only a part of our lives. But that cannot be permanent. When He sees that the time is come He asks to be admitted further; and then, if we refuse, we lose the joy of His companionship altogether, until that request be granted; we lose the joy, but not the companionship; He is still there, but not now the kindly Friend—now He is the accusing Judge, offering forgiveness if we confess, but insisting on the confession—the opening of

the closed chamber of the heart—because without that His forgiveness would only encourage us in taking poison.

Conversion is a progressive process. The beginning is to admit the Lord to our lives at all. But when that is done there are many doors still to be opened. Some we wish to keep closed; some we keep closed by a kind of inadvertence. Every closed door blocks His advance to sovereignty over our lives.

How, in fact, do we block His advance? Partly, of course, by sheer resistance. We definitely desire that He should not yet take charge of some parts of our lives; we are like St Augustine when he caught himself praying, "Give me chastity, but not yet." We want to indulge a little longer. There is no need to dwell on this. We know that it is wrong, and at least in our better moments set ourselves to undermine the barriers which in our worse moments we erect. But there is another way of blocking the divine grace. We block it by failure of expectation. Of course this is just one form of lack of faith. But it is so purely negative that it escapes detection. Moreover, there is a common belief among devout people that if we are personally devoted to Christ, His Presence will entirely purify us and put us right in every relation of life. Experience shows that this is simply not true. Devotion to Christ will win from Him purification from those faults of which we are already aware; it will also quicken our consciences and make us aware of others besides. But it does not at all invariably do this with completeness, especially where sins of omission are concerned. It was possible during the war to hear utterances from unquestionably devout and even holy persons, which showed that they had no inkling of the fact that Christ commanded them to feel charity for the Germans. We look back now with amazement to the attitude adopted by such saints as Wilberforce or Hannah More towards the sufferings of the poor in the early days of the Industrial Revolution. For saints they were; but they none the less had their blind spots; and blind they remained despite their saintliness.

God never thrusts His gifts on us ; He offers them ; we must actively receive them. So, for example, we go to receive the Holy Communion. There Christ unites us in Himself with all our fellow-Christians. " We, being many, are one bread, one Body." And we come out of church, even though we have " made a good communion," feeling no closer link with our fellow-Christians or our fellow-worshippers than when we went in ; and perhaps that was none at all. Has Christ failed ? No ; He offered us the gift of unity, but we were not expecting it, so we could not receive it. Grace never overrides the will of a man, for it is the personal influence of Jesus Christ upon his personality. Therefore it must carry his will with it or fail. And this is true of all the departments of our life, as of our life as a whole. And because this is so it is more often by what we call the force of circumstances than by a direct inward appeal that Christ first knocks at some new door in the mansion of the soul. We have not expected our worship to transform our citizenship ; but while that has been less than Christian it has led us to a state of things which makes us ask where sure guidance can be found, and, having asked, we can find it only in the Gospel. We have not expected our worship to transform our patriotism ; but while that has been less than Christian in our own and other nations, it has led us to a catastrophe from which civilisation barely escaped, and from which it is still doubtful whether it can recover ; so we ask if there is any sure guidance to be had for national policy, and we find it only in the Gospel. So we become aware that Christ is knocking at these two doors, seeking admittance where hitherto He has been excluded. And every time He knocks He is calling us to a new effort of repentance, a new stage in our conversion.

Let us consider what we have to show in some of the rooms at the door of which He is so plainly knocking now.

1. *Patriotism.*—Most markedly of all we need conversion with regard to our patriotism. We love our country ; we are proud of our country. Quite right. But if we are Christians our love for it must be a motive impelling us to use our

responsibility as citizens to make our country more effective in serving the purpose of God in Christ, which is, as we saw in Chapter II, to unite all peoples in love and obedience to God, and, therein, in fellowship with one another. And if we are Christians, our pride in our country will fasten on those things wherein our country is now serving that purpose. The Church is beginning to wake up to its missionary responsibility, though the process of throwing off its slumber is a very slow one. But we have not yet made it apparent that the Church stands for the universal brotherhood of all nations and all races.

A chaplain during the latter days of the war recorded as typical the utterance of an officer in some such terms as these: "What does this fellow Wilson want to butt in for with his beastly League of Nations?" [Here, in his excitement, the officer knocked his glass over.] "Oh, damn! Sorry, Padre. What I mean is, I can't stick all this blather about human brotherhood." The chaplain, as representing officially the Church of God, was supposed to feel shocked at hearing the word "Damn"; he was entitled to an apology; but it was not thought that he would expect an apology for blasphemy against the very heart of the Gospel which he was commissioned to preach. Christ is calling us to-day through all the circumstances of the time to make it quite clear that the purpose of God is world-fellowship. And He demands of many of us first of all conversion, because we have not yet been converted to this part of Christianity.

2. *Citizenship*.—As citizens of our country and our municipality we have responsibility for many departments in which there are great evils. Three will suffice for illustration.

(*a*) *Housing*.—Do you realise that there are thousands of rooms everyone of which is the complete home of a whole family? There they live, and eat, and sleep. Decency becomes impossible. Of the horrors involved it is shocking even to speak. There are cases where, when a death has occurred, the family must eat and sleep in the very room where a corpse is lying awaiting burial. And children grow up in those condi-

tions. Can you say that you care about this as much as you would if those children were your own? If not, you are not loving your neighbour as yourself. Great efforts are being made. But I am sure that if all of us who have decent houses minded these other people being thus housed as we should mind being thus housed ourselves, the efforts would be still greater. In the cities of Russia housing is rationed; the last statement I heard about Moscow declared that no one might occupy more than two rooms, because only so could everyone else be secured in the occupation of even one room. That is drastic. But is it just? And does it correspond with the relationship that should exist between those who are all members of one family. I do not advocate compulsory rationing of house-room. I think the loss would be greater than the gain. But those who have decent houses must care about those who have not as if they were their own brothers and sisters, as in the family of God they are. And we don't. Therefore the housing problem becomes sin in us, and we are being called to a conversion—a turning round of mind—in relation to it.

(*b*) *Unemployment*.—Here is another desperate evil causing widespread misery and degradation of character. No doubt it is largely due to causes which we cannot control; but many of us are making it worse. All forms of luxury and extravagance tend to produce unemployment. Foolish and ignorant people sometimes say that extravagance is good for trade. It may bring grist to the people engaged in a particular trade; and of course the *sudden* cessation of any luxury would cause dislocation and unemployment. But all the money spent on luxury is withdrawn from encouraging the making of necessities, which always employs more labour for every pound spent on it than do the luxury trades. People who flaunt their wealth in West London or on the Riviera are not only intensifying irritation and class-bitterness, they are actually increasing unemployment by their unproductive consumption of the nation's wealth. But how often do such thoughts form the basis of any part of our self-examination? Here again Christ stands at the door and knocks, and, for all our neglect to care

or this matter, is repeating the words: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to these, ye did it not to me."

(*c*) *Education.*—This is a vital topic, where our thought is hampered by the narrowness of our ideas. Our sole instrument of education, broadly speaking, has been books; and there are very many people who do not learn best or most easily out of books. But if we mean by education the provision of conditions which may develop the mind and train the character, anyone can see the desirability of keeping all citizens under education at least throughout the years of adolescence. There is no reason why this education should not be industrially productive. A good apprenticeship may be an excellent means of education. But the main fact to notice is this: all parents who can afford it keep their children under education up to the age of sixteen at least; nearly all to the age of eighteen; many to the age of twenty-three. If this is desirable for the children of the rich, is it any less desirable for the children of the poor? Particularly ought we to feel it intolerable that boys should leave school at fourteen and wander in the streets, picking up any job that comes their way, and exposed to the innumerable temptations inseparable from such an existence. Education need not for all be a matter of books. But all should have the fullest opportunity for development of mind and character. There is nothing so fatal to the true spirit of fellowship in a community as great differences of educational facilities. This will create, or perpetuate, deep class divisions far more effectively than differences of wealth. If we believe in the spirit of fellowship, we must desire all that makes for equality of educational opportunity. And if fellowship is, as this whole book has tried to show, essential to the Christian religion, the Christian must desire that in one way or another that equality shall be, stage by stage, established. But we have not really cared about it. We need conversion.

Now this conversion, like every other, must be individual. The special difficulty of the special call of Christ to our generation is that He calls us to a sense of individual responsi-

bility for corporate sin, and to individual repentance for our own share in it. The war ought to have taught us how to combine individual responsibility with collective effort. I suppose there was no one man whose withdrawal from the ranks of the French and British armies would have made any perceptible difference to the result. In that sense each man was negligible, and would have had that justification for shirking or slacking. The great thing was done only because thousands of men did a very little share of it with devotion So it is with all great achievements. A man who slacked in the war would have seemed to all of us to incur responsibility for the failure of our cause. We must feel the same about the cause of Christ. Each must do his utmost, though he cannot see that it can make any difference, and can see quite plainly that it will not make much ; but what lies upon him is responsibility for the whole great work.

We are driven to it by fear, as the nations have been driven to form a League of Nations by fear of what another war might mean. So by the impending judgment, which is ready to fall on us for our sins against fellowship as their consequence according to the laws by which the world is governed, we are frightened into sensibility to the claims of fellowship. But if fear is our only, or our chief, motive, we shall get nowhere. It is a selfish motive, and you cannot build fellowship on selfishness. Yet, thank God if fear has quickened in you that sensibility; and then, realising past neglect, go to God with your confession, and pray for His help as you set your mind and heart and will to the new tasks He lays upon you. Above all, being roused to consciousness of the evil, go with all the load of it to Jesus on the Cross. You knew before what the cost to Him had been of sins that you had recognised. There were these sins all the while, your unconverted citizenship and your unconverted patriotism ; and they cost Him the same agony. Not in your selfish fear, but in the patience of the love of Jesus you will find the converting and impelling power. It was for "the joy that was set before Him" that He faced the Cross ; and for that joy He waits till we will

open to Him all the doors of our souls. For to us He has entrusted the fulfilment of His purpose. The Sovereignty of God, He has told us, is like a man going into a far country and entrusting to his servants his goods. We may deliberately waste on ourselves what He gave us to use for Him; but the story says nothing of such treason; if it did, we know what the verdict would have been: "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." Or we may just "keep our own lives straight," as we call it; then we shall come with our talent as good as ever it was, and we shall say, "Here is what you lent me; it is none the worse; I took great care of it; I wrapped it up in a napkin." "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." Or perhaps we shall be able to say, "It was very little I could do; but I think I did something. You gave me your love, and I bring You some who love You and each other as a result of that love which You gave me." That is the "joy that was set before Him"; that is the joy of the Lord into which He will then invite us. It is no selfish recompense for a little self-repression. It is the joy of mutual love as a reward for love that gave itself freely. And we can begin to enter into it now.

Reader, if you have followed me so far, will you prepare for an Easter which shall be a world's resurrection to the life of love and joy and peace by a new opening of your own mind and heart to the love of Christ? Think what it is for which He hopes—a fellowship of free spirits united in a love which both answers and reproduces His. Think what it is that prevents that—our selfishness, partly an active self-seeking, partly a passive acquiescence in things that we can only disturb at greater or less inconvenience to ourselves. The source of power is God in Jesus Christ; the seat of that power is the individual heart and mind and will—therefore your heart and mind and will. Then, with the sorrows and troubles of the world in your memory, look at the Crucified; try to feel as He feels, to think as He thinks, to resolve as He resolves. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

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